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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

AN HISTORICAL SURVEY OF EDUCATION IN THE
STRATHMORE AREA OF ALBERTA, 1900-1958

by

EDWARD LLEWELLYN JAMES

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

DATE SEPTEMBER 1963

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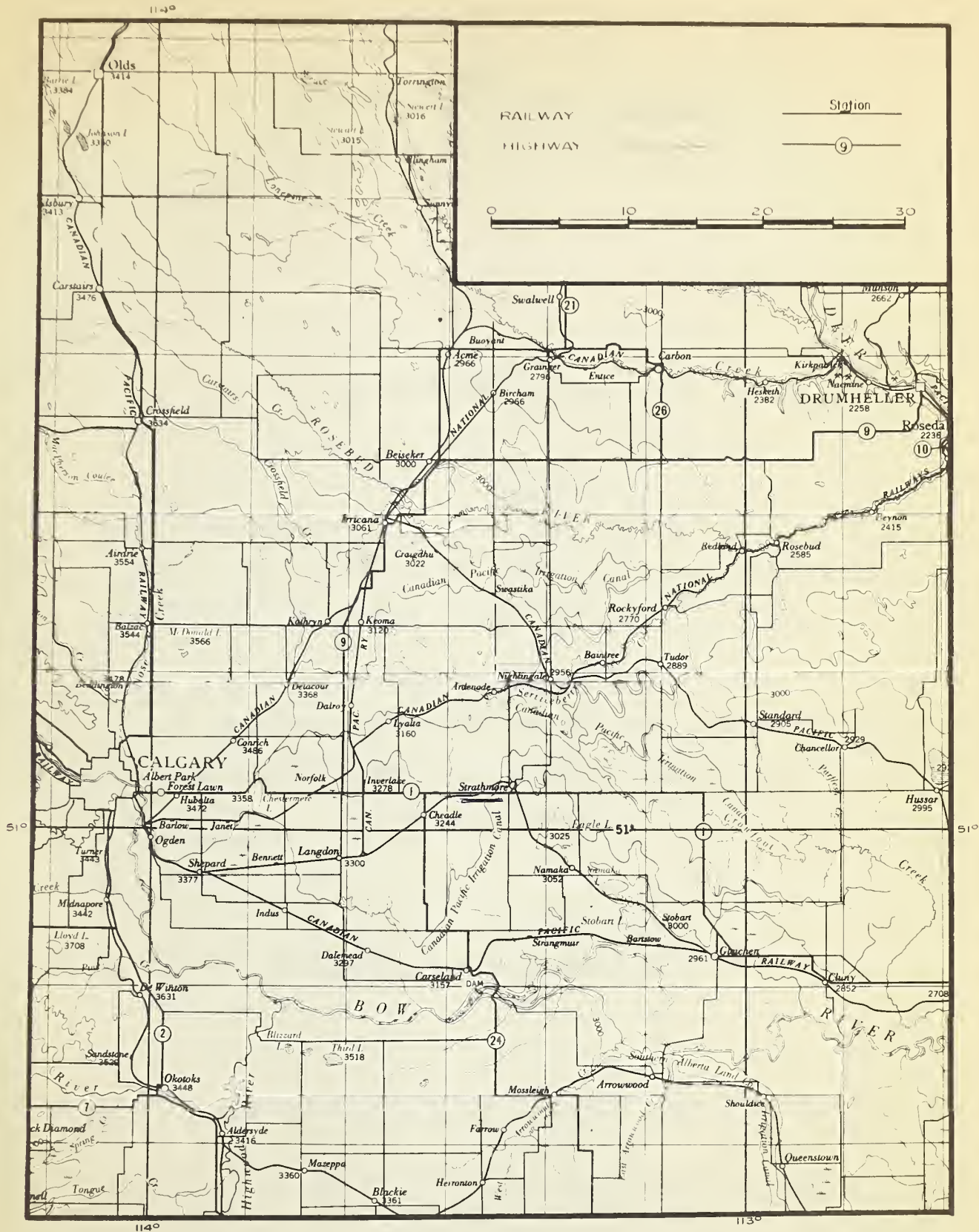
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MAP

STRATHMORE AREA



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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

AN HISTORICAL SURVEY OF EDUCATION IN THE STRATHMORE AREA OF ALBERTA, 1900 to 1958

EDWARD LLEWELLYN JAMES

Master of Education thesis, University of Alberta, 1963.

The study is an historical survey for which data were obtained from local papers, school district minute books, supervisor's annual reports, Departmental publications, student year books, personal interviews, etc.

It surveys the history of the educational development in the Strathmore area from 1900 to 1958. This survey is reviewed in three periods of time. The first period from 1900 to 1918 is concerned with the pioneer and early stages of education with the rapid influx of settlers into the Strathmore area which necessitated the erection of school districts. It describes the school plants erected, their school boards and school board problems which included the securing of qualified teachers, the short tenure of teachers, pupil attendance and the limited educational achievement.

The second period, from 1919 through the Depression to 1940, is concerned with the further increase of population in the area following the First World War and the need for more schools. It describes a period of better qualified teachers, improved teacher tenure, more stress upon high school education, the development of school health services and more emphasis upon extracurricular activities. It is also concerned with scientific and social developments, the breakdown of rural isolation, changes in educational theory, school curriculum and school programmes. It describes

the effects of the Depression economically and socially and the effects of these upon rural education, the election of the Social Credit Party and the introduction of the large units of administration.

The third period from 1940 to 1958 relates educational developments under divisional administration. It is concerned with the formation of centralizations and their advantages in aid of education for rural youth. It describes the effects of the Second World War and its consequent problems of teacher shortage and teacher certification, with attempts by divisional boards, government authorities, and teacher organizations to improve conditions. It describes the development of the Strathmore centralization in particular, with respect to school plant and educational development. It reveals that educational progress in the Strathmore area has throughout the years been one of vision and awareness in regard to quality of school buildings, teacher qualifications, teacher salaries, academic and extra-curricular activities.

Although education in the Strathmore area was not distinctive in the sense that it lead the way in educational development and innovation, it was progressive in character. The latest trends in educational development were readily adopted, especially in the Strathmore School. The result was for the most part a good level of education in the area.

INTRODUCTION

PROBLEM

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY - It was the purpose of this study (1) to survey the historical development of education with the Strathmore area, and examine the work of the Alberta Teachers' Association, the provincial Legislature, the school trustees and the teachers as it has applied to the educational development within the area, (2) to show how the development of education within the area has been affected by the social and economic changes which characterized the area.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY - The study of a particular area gives a depth of understanding to some of the major trends in the development of education in the last sixty years. This study is important as a social history of the Strathmore area with special reference to education in a changing social context.

Other studies, relative to the development of education, have been made in the past few years. Among these studies are Weston's "History of Education in Calgary",¹ which deals with the growth of the Calgary school system from 1881 to 1948; Gilles' study "School Divisions in Alberta: their Organization, Operation and Contribution to Educational Progress",² which

1

Phyllis E. Weston, "History of Education in Calgary" (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Alberta, Edmonton, 1951).

2

J.W. Gilles, "School Divisions in Alberta: their Organization, Operation, and Contribution to Educational Progress" (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Alberta, Edmonton, 1942.)

deals with the general legislative framework, including establishment, organization, finances, rights of religious minorities and a description of the Divisions in action; Jonason's study "The Larger Units of School Administration in Alberta";³ Johnson's study "An Educational and Sociological Study of the Grande Prairie Inspectorate",⁴ dealing with a review of early history and development of the Peace River country and the growth of its educational institutions.

The present study adds to this growing family of studies dealing with specific parts of Alberta or of education in Alberta. This study may be said to possess another importance, in that it is a story which may be of general interest as it tells how schools performed and changed in the Strathmore area. It preserves for the future a fund of information on the development of education in this part of Alberta. Much of the information presented here would probably not be recorded and hence would be lost to future generations. In the telling of this story, reference is made to people of the area who have dedicated themselves to a life's work of service in their community.

Because this study is a social history of education in a given community, changes in curriculum are not a major focus. These have been well covered at the elementary education level in Sheane's study "History

3

J.C. Jonason, "The Larger Units of Administration in Alberta" (unpublished Doctoral thesis, The University of Oregon, Eugene, 1961).

4

C.B. Johnson, "An Educational and Sociological Study of the Grande Prairie Inspectorate" (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Alberta, Edmonton 1943).

and Development of the Curriculum of the Elementary Schools of Alberta"⁵ and Goresky's study "The Beginning and Growth of the Alberta School System"⁶ which reviews educational progress in Alberta schools in the 1840's, to the 1940's and deals with curriculum changes to some extent.

THE PLAN OF THE STUDY - The study is planned to review the development of education from the turn of the century to 1958 in three periods of time. The first period, including the pioneer years and the early development of education, extends from 1900 to the end of World War 1. For this period, a review of social and economic conditions is made. The educational problems which these conditions created are surveyed, and a description is presented of how people coped with them. The second period, which is a period of expansion and growth, extends from the end of World War 1 to 1940. An attempt has been made to trace the population growth and the consequent development of the schools from 1919 to the beginning of the Depression in the early 'thirties. The writer endeavours to describe the economic and social conditions arising out of the Depression as they pertain to this particular area and to assess their effects upon education. The advances made in communication, transportation and in scientific fields, helped to change economic and social conditions of the time. A review is made of developments from the late 'thirties to 1958.

5

G.K. Sheane. "The History and Development of the Curriculum of the Elementary Schools of Alberta" (unpublished Doctoral thesis, The University of Toronto, 1948).

6

I. Goresky, "The Beginning and Growth of the Alberta School System" (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Alberta, Edmonton, 1944).

An attempt has been made to describe the need for administrative changes to provide for greater educational opportunities for rural youth. With the introduction of large units of administration in Alberta, came problems of school construction and improvement. Teacher recruitment and teacher qualifications became major issues, necessitating local and legislative corrective measures. School curriculum and programme changes marked the period.

METHOD OF PROCEDURE - In conducting the study the writer has used two major sources, education sources and community sources, particularly the local newspaper of the area. The educational sources include the 1955 school board records of the Strathmore School District, minute books, annual statements of various school districts, superintendents' reports, divisional trustee reports, and the Alberta Teachers' Association magazine. Reports of education carried in the local newspaper which began publication in 1910 have been referred to as a major community source of information about education.

The writer was a resident in the Strathmore area for many years, a pupil in the Strathmore school for two years, and he has been a careful observer of the Strathmore area since he left in 1939. In a sense, the writer has been a participant observer of many of the changes that he is reporting. While the history that is presented in the following pages is based on documentary sources, the writer's own experiences in the Strathmore area have been valuable in interpreting the documents examined.

CHAPTER 1

EARLY HISTORY OF THE STRATHMORE AREA 1903-1912

Strathmore, a town of 717 population in 1956, is situated on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway thirty miles east of Calgary. It is on the Trans-Canada Highway and is the centre of a large farming area of about ten miles radius, serving several surrounding rural districts as a market and a trading centre. Good roads link all of these communities with the town where the bulk of their trading is done, for although most of the surrounding communities do have railway facilities and local stores besides the grain storage elevators, these serve in a limited capacity only.

The Strathmore district is essentially an agricultural one devoted to grain growing and stock raising. The surface of the land is typically prairie with gently rolling hills. The soil in the immediate vicinity of the town and in the districts, extending well to the north and to the south of it, is of sandy loam, best suited for grass and grazing purposes although wheat and other grains are grown in this belt fairly successfully with proper care. Toward the east in the Crowfoot district the soil is of heavy loam, excellently suited to grain growing. Toward the west the soil is also good loam and well suited to grain growing.

The climate of the district is extreme, with some winters days being moderated by the chinook winds which at times blow over southern Alberta. Snowfall is moderate while the rainfall is light, being only

sufficient for grain growing.

Strathmore was named after a town in Scotland. It is a word of Gaelic origin meaning "fertile valley." Such a name was well chosen, for the original site of this Western railway stop was a pretty valley near Eagle Lake, three miles south-east of the present location of the town. The siding was moved three miles west along the railway to eliminate a long double rail haul from Eagle Lake to the next stop eight miles farther west along the line to Cheadle.²

As was the case with many of the prairie settlements, the first settlers of the community were cattle ranchers who came to the district just before the turn of the century.³ The village of Strathmore resounded for several years to the bawling of cattle as herds were driven through its streets to the large stock pens on the railway there. Aside from the cattlemen, however, there were a few interested in farming. Among these was the Canadian Coal and Colonization Company which, under the direction of John Lister Kay, had acquired large tracts of land in several districts of the West in 1888 and 1889. One such tract of some ten thousand acres was at Namaka, eight miles south and east of Strathmore. Another of some twelve thousand acres was at Langdon, eight miles west of the town-site. Besides carrying on farming operations, these farms grazed herds

2

The Strathmore Standard, May 11, 1939

3

Ibid. Among these early ranchers were such locally well known names as P. Burns, A. MacLean, W. Fredericks, J. Harwood, H. Groves and O. Moorehouse. These and others gave a colorful past to the district.

of sheep and cattle. After a few years the farms were broken up and rented or sold to incoming settlers. Strathmore itself, at this time consisted of nothing more than a mere shack for a railway siding and
 4
 stockyards.

By 1903, however, more land was being taken and it was at that time that the C.P.R. Co., by negotiation with the Dominion government, arranged to consolidate three million acres of their Grand Lands into what is known as the "Irrigation Block", located east of Calgary. Construction was begun in 1903. The railway siding of Strathmore, being centrally located with respect to the Irrigation Block, was selected as engineering headquarters for the project. A large force of engineers and construction workers were employed and quartered there, many of whom remained in the centre as active citizens of the town for years to
 5
 come. The main canal for the irrigation project was constructed first. A dam was then put in, that created Chestermere Lake, ten miles east of Calgary. This lake is the water supply for the irrigation system. At the same time a secondary canal was constructed through Strathmore. Water was first turned into the main canal in 1906, and in 1907, the first water was delivered to the settlers. By 1910, the entire system of the Western Irrigation Block was completed making a total of 219,000 acres irrigable. Permanent irrigation headquarters were erected in

 4

Ibid.

5

Ibid. Among these citizens were the Schultzes, the Glendennings, the Fessendens, the Stocktons, the Slaters, the Quirins and many others. They helped Strathmore grow into a thriving community.

Strathmore in 1911. Trees and gardens were planted and these headquarters became an attractive landmark in the district. The first sale of non-irrigable land was made by the C.P.R. Co. in 1903, while the first sale⁶ of irrigable land was made in 1905.

Upon completion of the irrigation system, the C.P.R. Co. embarked upon an advertising and selling program which resulted in an influx of settlers in such numbers that in 1906 to 1911, farmlands were taken up at such a rapid pace in the district that Strathmore became a boomtown. The first settlers were from the United States in 1906 and 1907. These were not settled as a colony but took up farms individually. To speed up settlement and development however the policy of establishing colonies on "ready-made" farms was inaugurated by the C.P.R. Co. In such proposed colonies, farms of about eighty acres in size were fenced, plowed, and readied for cropping. Buildings consisting of a small house and a couple of barns were erected on them. The first of such colonies was the Nightingale Colony situated about ten miles north-east of Strathmore and settled in 1909. This colony was the first British colony started by the C.P.R. Co. The colony consisted of some twenty-four families and continued with little change for ten years in spite of the poor soil conditions of the district.

Other colonies, similar in nature to the Nightingale Colony were established by the C.P.R. Co. Of these there were the Cairn Hill Colony eight miles south of the town and the Namaka Colony ten miles south-east⁷ of Strathmore in 1911.

6

Leslie Munro, Manager, Department of Natural Resources, C.P.R. Co. Calgary. Personal interview.

7

The Strathmore Standard, May 11, 1939

About this time, owing to the rapid influx of settlers, the C.P.R. Co. conceived the idea of setting up demonstration and supply farms for the purpose of educating inexperienced farmers in the use of sound agricultural methods and to provide a source of supply of good livestock, feed and garden products for the Western farmers, all with a view to improving generally the agricultural and livestock interests of Western Canada. The first of these farms was established at Strathmore under the name of the Strathmore Demonstration and Supply Farm. The farm commenced operation in 1909 and specialized in the breeding of purebred Holstein cattle with the result that in the ensuing years hundreds of breeding cattle were distributed throughout Western Canada. Besides the activities in this respect, but as an outgrowth of it, the Strathmore Demonstration Farm developed into a major source of supply of dairy, poultry, garden and greenhouse products for the Company's hotel and dining-car use.

By 1906, aside from the railway station which had replaced the caboose in 1905, the only other business establishments were the C.P.R. Co. land office and a tar-roofed shack which housed the hotel, general store, and post office. The general store and post office were owned and operated by Mr. and Mrs. George Lloyd. It was they who later built the present King Edward Hotel on the same site. Mr. Lloyd also owned and operated a livery barn and corral on the present main street. During the years 1906 to 1911 however, the demands made by surrounding districts which were being rapidly inhabited by settlers, brought in many new businesses and the town grew rapidly. By 1911, the population of Strathmore

had reached the five hundred mark and at the request of the councillors, it was incorporated into a town. This appears to have marked the end of the first stage of the town's growth for the population remained at slightly over the five hundred mark for the next thirty years. Land in the rural areas continued to be taken up for the next ten to fifteen years⁹ and Strathmore continued to serve these districts.

CHAPTER 2

REGULATION GOVERNING THE EARLY SCHOOLS (1904-1919)

Since the earliest frontier settlements an early concern of the settlers has been that of providing some degree of education for their children. The Canadian Government has never been unaware of this need and in the Ordinances of the North West Territories, provided for the erection of school districts where there was a sufficient number of children to justify such action. It is a matter of note that in practically all growing communities the first public building of any importance was the schoolhouse which served not only as a place of education but also as a community and social centre. During the early period of development in the Strathmore area there were eleven schools built to take care of the educational needs of the people. These schools included the following listed names of the districts with their district¹ number and the date of erection:

<u>Name of School District</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Date of Erection</u>
Cheadle	947	January 14, 1904
Strathmore	1587	December 27, 1906
Orange Valley	1952	March 24, 1909
Akenstad	1995	June 24, 1909
Hervey	2185	May 10, 1910
Harwood	2248	July 25, 1910
Serviceberry Creek	2258	August 8, 1910
Berta Vale	2331	December 9, 1910
Crowfoot	2393	March 9, 1911
Nightingale	2484	July 10, 1911
Fairplay	2682	March 11, 1912

It may be noted that the date of erection of a school district was the date the district was officially declared organized by the Minister of Education. Construction of the schoolhouse did not start until an official

1

Alberta Gazette, 1912-1913

board of trustees had been elected and necessary measures toward the work had been taken.

Regulations pertaining to the construction and operation of schools were officially set forth in the Regulations of the Department of Education.² When the Territories were organized into provinces the Government did not change to any great extent the regulations governing education which had been in force under the Council of Public Instruction for the Territorial Government. The Department was organized under a Minister of Education who was responsible for teacher certification, curriculum, inspection, and textbooks. Nearly all schools were established on the initiative of the residents of the proposed district. Any three prospective resident taxpayers of the proposed district could form themselves into a committee to undertake the preliminary steps toward the erection of a school district. With their request for the erection of the district, they were required to show: (1) that there were at least twelve children between the ages of five and sixteen years inclusive, actually residing in the proposed district, and (2) that there were at least four persons actually resident in the proposed district who occupied land and who would be liable for assessment. If he approved of the erection, the Minister of Education defined the boundaries and placed notice of it in the Alberta Gazette. Forms, relative to the first meeting of the ratepayers, were then sent to the initial committee with full instructions for their completion. To be qualified to vote at the ratepayer's meeting a person had to be of the full age of twenty-one years

and to have resided in the district as the owner or the occupant of assessable property therein for a period of at least two months³ immediately prior to the date of the meeting.

Should the majority of the ratepayers at this meeting vote in favour of the erection of the district, trustees were immediately elected and complete returns were made to the Department regarding the whole procedure. When all requirements of the Department had been complied with, the Minister of Education gave his official order for the erection of the district and notice of the order was published in the Official Gazette. A school district so formed was to consist of sixteen or seventeen sections of land confined within an area about four miles square. The exact size and shape was determined to some extent by the geographic conditions of the area. The schoolhouse was to be located in the centre of the district, easily accessible to all the children of the district. The school grounds were to be on a dry elevated spot admitting of easy drainage and nowhere near stagnant water or noisy surroundings. The grounds were to be of at least an acre in size and twice as long as it was wide. It was to be fenced and to be kept clean of undesirable growth. In a village or town the grounds could be anywhere located at the discretion of the Board. There were to be separate privies for boys and girls, each privy to be provided with a six-foot high screened entrance. The water supply was to be obtained from a drilled well if possible which should be pumped out frequently. Lacking a good well supply the Board was to obtain good water locally.⁴

3

Ibid

4

Regulations of the Department of Education, Appendix B, 1906

The school building was to provide two hundred cubic feet of space with an eleven foot ceiling. The width of the building was to be two-thirds to five-sixths the length and to have two cloakrooms, book shelves, a wash basin, and a place for dinner pails or lunch boxes. Windows were to be to the left of the pupils and to be one-fifth of the floor space in area. Ventilation was to be provided by the opening of windows. Temperature was to be maintained at sixty-six degrees. Each room was to contain sixty square feet of blackboard space two and one-half feet from the floor and four feet deep with a chalk trough. Equipment required was a school register, a world globe, ball frames, dictionary;, wall maps of the World, North American, Canada and Alberta, chalk and brushes, thermometer, clock, broom, pail and cup, wash basin and towels, teacher's desk and two chairs. Also recommended were authorized supplementary sets of readers. This scale of issue was significant because it was typical of such issue in most schools of the area for years to come.

School hours were to be from nine o'clock a.m. until twelve noon with a noon-hour recess of from one hour to two hours in duration. Dismissal was to be from three-thirty to four p.m. depending upon the length of the noon-hour recess. There were to be two additional recess periods, one in the mid-morning and one in the mid-afternoon, each of fifteen minutes. The first curriculum used in Alberta was prepared by Dr. D. J. Goggin, Superintendent of Education for the Council of Public Instruction. The subjects listed were: Reading, Arithmetic, History, Geography, Composition, Grammar, Music, Drawing, Hygiene and Physiology, Nature Study and Agriculture, Orthoepey, Spelling and Manners and Morals.

The cost of maintaining the schools was to be met by taxation and legislative grants. Each year the Board of Trustees made its estimates of the amount required to meet all expenditures for the next year and levied such rate on the taxable property as was deemed necessary. Property was assessed by the official assessor for the district. In rural districts the single land system prevailed and the maximum rate was set at ten cents per acre. In village and town districts, real and personal property were to be assessed and the rate of tax was levied on the assessed value of the taxable property within the district, but such rate was not to exceed twelve mills for ordinary school purposes, although an additional rate was allowed if necessary to meet any debenture indebtedness that may have been incurred.

Legislative grants were fixed by the School Grants Ordinance. The size of the grant was dependent upon the amount of assessable land, the number of days the school was kept open during the year, the class of certificate held by the teacher, the regularity of attendance, and the report of the school inspector on the efficiency with which the school was operated. In rural districts containing 6400 acres or less of assessable land as shown by the last revised assessment roll, \$1.20 was paid for each day the school was kept open; to each district containing less than 6400 acres, one cent more per day for each 160 acres or fractional part thereof less than 6400 acres; and to each district containing more than 6400 acres, one cent less per day for each additional 160 acres or fractional part thereof. There was to be a minimum of ninety cents per day. To each district whose school was kept open more than 160 days in the year, 40 cents was to be paid per day for each

additional day up to 50 extra days. There was to be paid to each district employing a first class teacher the sum of ten cents for each day such teacher was employed. Each district which maintained a certain percentage of attendance was paid according to the following schedule:

Rural	40-50 per cent	--	5 cents per day
	51-60 per cent	--	10 cents per day
	61-70 per cent	--	15 cents per day
	71-80 per cent	--	20 cents per day
	81-100 per cent	-	25 cents per day

Village and Town

	50-60 per cent	--	5 cents per day
	61-70 per cent	--	10 cents per day
	71-80 per cent	--	15 cents per day
	81-90 per cent	--	20 cents per day
	91-100 per cent	-	25 cents per day

Finally there was to be paid to each district which maintained a minimum grading on its efficiency in respect to grounds, buildings, equipment and progress, a sum not exceeding 15 cents per day in proportion to such grading for each day the school was kept open. The grading was to be based on the inspector's report. One-half of such grant was to be spent on library books from lists set forth by the Department, or at the inspector's request, upon apparatus and teaching equipment instead of books. Grants were also paid to districts maintaining rooms wherein grades higher than Standard V were taught, at a rate of \$75.00 per term, providing the average attendance in such rooms for any such term was at least twenty pupils. A further provision with respect to the grant payable to any district was that in the event a teacher's salary was not paid in full at the end of the year, the grant or any portion of it owing to the district would be paid to the teacher.

CHAPTER 3

THE EARLY SCHOOLS - 1904 - 1919

The schools of the early period conformed well to the standards laid down by the Department. They were sturdily constructed frame buildings, in many cases erected upon a stone foundation and with few exceptions, painted white with a green trim. A common plan and one exemplified in the Nightingale and the Serviceberry Creek schools provided for only one entrance which opened upon a small vestibule of about six by ten feet. Upon either side of the vestibule was a cloakroom, each about six feet by fifteen feet and containing shelves for lunch-boxes, benches and coat hooks. A water pail and wash basin usually occupied one corner. A common towel and a common drinking cup was provided. In most of the schools however, the idea of water pails was replaced with a water crock equipped with a fount and paper towels replaced the common towel within a few years. In most of the schools too, a well was drilled at the time the school was built although in too many cases the water from the well was unfit for drinking and the school had to resort to a safe water supply from a nearby farm, the water being carried by the school children taking turns at the job. The classrooms of the various schools varied in size according to the community needs but all had enough space for five or six rows of desks, each row of six or seven desks being fastened to the floor. There was always space at the back for a heater. The floors were of fir while the walls were plastered. Oil was put on the floor to reduce dust in sweeping. The early stoves were usually coal burning heaters but these were replaced in a few years by a larger style which provided better

circulation of the heated air. In some cases a fuel shed was attached to the school building with an opening to the main classroom. None of the schools, including Strathmore, was equipped with built-in cupboards. Book space and storage space was provided after the school was built.

The Cheadle School

The first school to be built in the Strathmore area was the Cheadle School which opened for classes in the fall of 1904 with some fifteen pupils in attendance. It was a small structure, sixteen by twenty feet without cloakrooms or conveniences of any kind and built at a cost of less than four hundred dollars. This sum for which the board negotiated a debenture loan with the Bank of Hamilton in Winnipeg was repayable in¹ ten annual installments at six percent interest. The school was built with an eye to economy rather than with an eye to the future for at this time Cheadle consisted of only a railway siding, a water tank, corrals, and a general store and post office with the district around open prairie utilized by several large cattle ranches, the owners of which were for the most part bachelors. There were a few large families in the district, however, and these were responsible for the erection of² the school district at that early date.

To meet debenture payments and other expenses the board struck a

1

School Board Minutes, Cheadle School District, Vol. 1, p. 11.

2

The Strathmore Standard, May 11, 1939.

The families were those of W. J. Miller, J. Lyons, F. N. Hartell and F. McKenzie.

tax rate of six cents per acre for the first year. So many complained of the taxes and payments were so late that the Board soon after lowered the rate to two cents per acre, only to revert back to the six cents per acre rate in 1906 but allowing a ten percent rebate if the taxes were paid before December of 1906. A teacher, Miss Annie L. Meikle, was hired at the rate of forty dollars per month at the opening of the school term. She was engaged for three month periods because the Ordinance required that the teacher be paid every three months and because too, the board was uncertain of its financial condition over any length of time. She remained with the Board for eighteen months. In May of 1906, the board felt more secure financially and proceeded to have the schoolhouse finished on the inside, have a porch built on to act as a cloakroom and washroom, and to have a cupboard built in one corner to hold a few books and other supplies. A few desks were bought to accommodate new pupil arrivals. The original seating was provided by benches placed at tables. Water supply for the first four years was obtained from a nearby farm.³ The janitor work was done by a local resident.

By the spring of 1908, the school had become so overcrowded that the trustees were forced to consider the construction of a larger schoolhouse to accommodate the growing needs of the community. Following the approval of the Minister of Education, the board negotiated a debenture loan for three thousand and twelve dollars. A school costing two thousand dollars was built with an eighteen inch stone foundation. It was equipped with desks and a two hundred dollar furnace. The school was

built in the village of Cheadle on two acres of ground.⁴ A sixteen by twenty-eight foot barn was built at the same time to stable the many horses used by the children for transportation and two double privies⁵ were built according to specifications of the Department. The school grounds were fenced with the front portion being of four inch pickets. A well was drilled on the grounds. The old school was sold and twelve dollars from the proceeds of the sale was used for the purchase of library books. To pay running expenses the Board struck a rate of four mills, the land in the rural areas being assessed at sixteen dollars per acre while the occupied village lots were assessed at fifty dollars and unoccupied lots at forty dollars. In 1913, the rate was increased to⁶ five mills and the rural land assessed at seventeen dollars per acre. School boards at this time were responsible for the collection of their own school revenue since municipalities were not organized at this early date.

Janitor services were done in the new school from the time of its opening to 1920 by a janitor hired by the board. Previous to 1908, various schemes had been employed to have the janitor work done, none of which had proved successful.⁷ An experiment had been tried whereby each family was responsible for a specified length of time but the best method appears to have been to have some of the older children assist the

4

School Board Minutes, Cheadle School District, Vol. 1, p. 33

It is noteworthy that the debenture loan for this school was negotiated with Nay and James of Regina.

5

Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 37.

6

Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 38.

7

School Board Minutes, Cheadle School District, Vol. 1, p. 107.

teacher. In 1908, the janitor was paid six dollars per month for the summer months and ten dollars for the winter months. From 1913 the job was let by tender with the rates being six dollars for summer and ten dollars for the winter months. These rates were increased in the ensuing years as his responsibilities were broadened. One of the chief problems facing the board which made the hiring of a janitor necessary was that of fire lighting and the maintaining of the proper temperature during the winter. The furnace was constantly in need of repair and minimum temperature of fifty degrees demanded by the board for school opening in the mornings was often not attained. In 1916, to avoid repeatedly closing the school during very cold weather it was found necessary to have a stove placed in the classroom to assist the furnace and to be used when the furnace was undergoing repair or alteration.

The Strathmore School

Within two years after the opening of the Cheadle School, the community of Strathmore, experiencing in its initial stages of development a very rapid growth due principally to the fact that the C.P.R. Co. had established its irrigation headquarters and land office there, found itself in need of a school. Following erection of the district in 1906, the first school board consisting of Mr. Ulrich, chairman, Mr. W. S. Bush, secretary-treasurer, and Mr. A. H. Huffman, visualized future needs. They negotiated a debenture loan of twenty-five hundred dollars and hired Mr. Barr, a local contractor, to build a two-room school to cost \$4500.00. It was built on a five-acre piece of ground in the south-east section of the village with only one room being completed for a start. It was

furnished with the minimum of prescribed essentials and desks to accommodate
 9
 seventeen pupils.

School opened on January 4, 1908, with Miss Edith McKeen as the first teacher. When twenty-five pupils reported for classes they provided the school board with an overcrowding problem which was solved by the simple expediency of having several of the pupils sit double until more desks could be obtained. The problem soon became acute, however. Such was the growth of the village that by the month of June there were fifty-two pupils in attendance in the one room. It is not surprising that Miss McKeen resigned at the end of that month. Her place was taken by Miss Killoran who agreed to do the work at a salary of \$720 per year. She was assisted in her tremendous task by having one of the older pupils, Miss Ruth Imlay, supervise a group of smaller children during the afternoons. As attendance continued to increase the Board had the second room of the school completed and in January of 1910, hired Mr. H. J. Spicer to act as principal and to teach the higher grades of IV to VIII while Miss Killoran taught the primary grades. Mr. Spicer received a salary
 10
 of \$800 and remained as principal until December of 1911. The population of the community continued to increase and by fall of 1910 there were 115 pupils enrolled in the two rooms.

Criticism of the overcrowded conditions in the school was loudly voiced, especially by the newly organized Board of Trade. There was much complaining too, during the winter months, that the rooms were cold and

that the small children had too far to walk, many of them being
¹¹
 improperly clothed. The school site was some six blocks from the centre
 of the village. With so much dissatisfaction the Board contemplated
 selling the school and rebuilding another one at a more central location.
 This was finally considered an unnecessary expense, however. Things
 remained as they were with the exception that one class of the primary
 grades was moved to a room on the second floor of the fire hall which was
¹²
 located on the main street for the winter months of 1910-11. For the
 comfort of the other small pupils, Mr. Lloyd, a citizen, supplied a
 means of transportation for them during the cold weather. The room in
 the fire hall was in reality a third classroom since both classrooms
 were maintained at the school.

In view of the increased attendance, the Board now took steps to
 have another school built for the following year and after negotiating
 a debenture loan of seven thousand dollars, hired Mr. H. S. Hirtle, a
 local contractor, to construct a two storey building on an acre of
 ground adjoining the school grounds to the north. The building was large
 enough to provide for four classrooms but only two were completed in
¹³
 1911. Two rooms were also constructed in the basement to serve as the
 janitor's quarters. As these soon proved unfit for residence purposes
 the janitor was required to live in a tent on the school grounds for
 several months until more suitable accommodation could be found. The new

¹¹

Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 43

¹²

Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 49

¹³

Ibid.,

school was ready for use by April, 1912 and the primary class was moved
14
from the fire hall to occupy one of the rooms.

With the 1911 Census showing a population of 531, the village of Strathmore was incorporated into a town. The Board of Trustees was now increased from three to five in accordance with Departmental regulations and all school taxes were collected by the town council. The school board obtained their funds by means of an annual requisition which was forwarded to the council. Following its incorporation as a town there was comparatively little increase in the population. The school continued on a three-room plan until the summer of 1914 when there was a demand by a group of parents for the teaching of Grade X. In September of that year the Board acceded to the request and opened a fourth room; the two rooms of the old school being used for Grades VII to X, while the two lower rooms of the new school were occupied by grades up to and including Grade VI. This change was not without its problems, however.

In order to finance the high school, the Board found it necessary to make an agreement with the parents concerned to the effect that they pay a yearly fee of fifteen dollars per year. In this they were disappointed for the Department of Education stipulated that those who paid taxes could not legally be charged an additional fee and that should the attendance in the high school fall below six pupils, no high school grant would be paid. Owing to the tardiness with which non-resident fees were paid combined with the poor attendance, the Board in December of 1914 threatened to close the high school and called a special meeting

with the parents. Out of this came a promise of better attendance and a prompt voluntary payment of a nine-dollar fee for each Grade X pupil. High school was thus continued, but with the further understanding that should the attendance fall below six, the parents concerned would pay the amount of the Government grant which would not be forthcoming. In June, 1916, Mr. Niddrie, the principal, reported that all of the prescribed high school subjects were being taught including Latin and French but with the exception of Manual Training.

With the successful introduction of Grade X, the people of the town were not to be denied further high school. In September of 1916 with the appointment of Mr. H. E. Clark as principal, Grade XI was offered.

Agriculture was added to the list of subjects, one-half the cost of the equipment for the course being assumed by the Provincial Government. 15

Then in the fall of 1917, Grade XII was made available to those who wished to continue their schooling although only eight pupils were enrolled that 16

fall. During the same year, all high school fees were cancelled to ratepayers because the Government threatened to stop the payment of the grant if the charging of fees were continued. In June 1918, Mr. Clark reported one entrant for the Grade VIII examinations, nine for Grade IX, three for Grade X, none for Grade XI, and five for Grade XII. It was also reported that Strathmore, for the first time, had students entered 17 for Normal School training at both Camrose and Calgary.

15

Strathmore School Board Minutes, Vol. 1, p. 228

16

Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 244

17

Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 280

During these earlier years of school growth, the Strathmore School Boards were apparently quite alert to the need for improving the educational facilities of the school and for furthering of pupil interest with a view to bettering their academic achievement and attendance.

In 1914, the Board adopted the policy of giving prizes to pupils who made high marks on their final examinations. Such prizes were usually in the form of books. Room prizes as well as individual prizes¹⁸ were also given each month for the best attendance in the school. School attendance especially that of the older pupils was very poor owing to the fact that their assistance was needed at home during the busy fall and spring seasons as well as to the many cases of truancy due largely to the unconcern of parents. It was not until 1917 that a truant officer was employed to check once a week with the teachers upon the attendance of their pupils. This task had previously been one of the duties of the¹⁹ town constable with results that were not satisfactory to the Boards.

With respect to the health of the children and the maintaining of sanitary conditions within the school, close supervision was maintained both by the members of the Board and by the local doctor who was employed by them to check upon such matters. Their visits of inspection often resulted in admonitions to the janitor and in recommendations for improvement to the Board. Such recommendations were usually carried out and in cases when an epidemic threatened, proper care was taken toward disinfecting the rooms and supplies and often too, in the closing of the school for a specified time.

¹⁸

Strathmore School Board Minutes, Vol. 1, p. 176.

¹⁹

Ibid. Vol. 1. p. 261

Members of the early Boards frequently took advantage of the close proximity of the C.P.R. Co. Demonstration Farm to utilize its facilities in broadening the education of the older pupils, many of whom came from the surrounding rural districts. Officials from the Farm periodically lectured the students on the most up-to-date methods of farming and stockraising while, by way of practical education they were encouraged to cultivate small garden plots under the supervision of the officials. As an added incentive to the study, prizes were given for the best gardens. The aid of the Farm was further employed in the planting of trees around the school grounds with the results that within a few years the Strathmore School grounds became noted for their fine appearance.

Changes were also brought about in the Board's policy with respect to regulations governing the teaching staff and the hiring of teachers. In 1914 in an attempt to overcome the awkward situation created by a teacher leaving during the school year without notice, the Board adopted the practice of requiring teachers to give at least one month's notice of their intention to leave and that failure to do so would result in the forfeiture of one month's salary. In 1917, to insure the hiring of qualified teachers, the Board of that year resolved that all future appointments to the high school staff have the approval of the Inspector of Schools. Then in 1918, the Board adopted the practice of hiring qualified teachers as substitutes for teachers of the staff who were absent owing to illness. They also adopted the policy of paying teachers who were absent on account

of illness, for the period of such absence. Previous to 1918, high school students had been employed to fill in when a teacher was away. These students had been paid at the rate of one dollar per day for

their services.

The Crowfoot School District

In frontier days since schools were not built unless there was a sufficient number of children in any district to warrant such action, children of families who arrived first were without school facilities. Some of these families were thus deprived for several years before the arrival of others made the formation of a school district possible and they were required if they were to attend school, to live away from home in a town or city. Most parents, however, had neither the money or the inclination to send their children away but supplied what education they could in their own homes from their own background of information and in some cases with the assistance of a tutor hired for the purpose. In some cases, children living in a non-organized district could if space was available, attend a school in a neighbouring district already established. This last practice was quite common and led to such schools becoming overcrowded.

As land continued to be settled following the C.P.R. land settlement schemes and advertising campaigns, the Crowfoot School was one of nine to be built in the Strathmore area between 1909 and 1918.

21

School Board Minutes, Strathmore School District, Vol. 1, p. 269.

22

Ibid. Vol. 1, p. 153.

On January 11, 1911, Messrs. W.R. Harvey, S.F. Garriot, and H.G. Scheer formed themselves into a committee to negotiate with the Department of Education for the erection of a school district and forthwith sent a map of the proposed district along with other required information, to
 23
 the Minister of Education for his approval. Following a few amendments, the formation of the district was approved. The negotiating committee then called a meeting of the ratepayers of the proposed district to vote their approval. The meeting voiced their approval and elected a board of
 24
 trustees. With these preliminaries disposed of, the Minister of Education, on March 9, 1911 officially erected the Crowfoot School District #2393.

The first meeting of the Board was held at the home of Mr. Harvey on March 21, 1911, at which Mr. Harvey was elected Chairman of the Board and Mr. Scheer was elected Secretary-Treasurer. At this meeting too, the school site was chosen. The site was rejected by Department because it was not centrally located within the district.

Following the selection of a suitable site by the Inspector for the area, the Board applied to the C.P.R. Co. for the immediate purchase of the required two-acre plot. They were informed by the company, however that sale of the land was not possible at the time, but that the district may build a school there. Deed to the land was not obtained until 1931 at which time the district bought it at the price of \$25.00 per acre.

 23

School Board Minutes, Crowfoot School District, Vol. 1, p. 1.

24

School Board Minutes, Crowfoot School District, Vol. 1, p. 3.
 (The first Board of Trustees consisted of Mr. W.R. Harvey, Mr. S.F. Garriott and Mr. H.G. Scheer.)

The Board decided to build and immediately requested of the
 Department, permission to secure a \$3200 debenture loan. In this
 request the Board was disappointed for the Department refused them
 such a large loan. The Board after further discussion then applied
 for a \$1900 loan which did receive approval, and applied for and obtain-
 ed plans for the building through a Calgary architect.

The Board upon applying for tenders for the construction of the
 school met further checks upon their plans. They were unable to receive
 bids for the work because of the long distance from town and the cold
 weather experienced that winter. Undaunted the Board made a proposal to
 the ratepayers of the district to the effect that they themselves haul
 the lumber and erect the building by voluntary labour and free of expense.
 This was accepted and before spring, the school, outbuildings and a
 teachers' residence were solidly constructed. A stable for the horses
 was not built at the time due to lack of finances. This building was
 not erected until the fall of 1914, when the district sponsored a social
 evening and dance in the school; the proceeds from which were utilized
 in the purchase of lumber for its construction.

The question of a water supply caused some concern with the
 possibility of installing a water cistern being considered. This was
 eventually rejected by the Board who decided that until such times as a
 well could be drilled, they would rely upon the expedient of having the

25

School Board Minutes, Crowfoot School District, Vol. 1, p. 3.

26

Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 4.

drinking water supplied to the school from a nearby farm. A well was not drilled on the school grounds until the spring of 1915. At that time trees were planted upon the grounds.

The School opened for classes in April, 1912, with Mr. Flynn as the first teacher.²⁷ He remained only a few weeks and the school remained closed until another teacher in the person of Miss Fife was hired to start duties in January of 1913. She was hired for a three-month period at a salary of \$60 per month either party having the right to terminate the agreement with two weeks notice. When she complained that the salary was not enough in consideration of the fact that she was required to do the janitor work, the Board decided to pay her an extra three dollars per month and allow her free use of the teacherage with fuel during the winter months of November to April inclusive and free use of the teacherage during the remaining months. She remained to complete the term.

On applying for a teacher for the following year, the Board received four applications for the position but could come to terms with only one of them. Since he was teaching on a Departmental permit they requested of the Department that his permit be extended that he might teach in their school. He did not remain beyond the fall term and another teacher was secured to finish the year, but she resigned at Easter and the Board was again applying for a teacher to finish the year. They were able to obtain the services of another female teacher who did complete the year but who was requested to resign in June because the

²⁷

Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 14.

Board was not satisfied with her management of the school.

During the next few years the problem of retaining a teacher for any length of time persisted much as it had done in the previous years. The school was closed at odd intervals of from two to four weeks duration while a new teacher was being sought until the Board hired Miss Walsh, who proved an exception. She was hired for the spring term of 1917 and remained to complete the spring term of 1918, thus being the first teacher to complete a year's service in the district. Her work was very satisfactory. She was credited with bringing about desirable changes in the conduct of the school generally and with being the first teacher to issue periodic reports with respect to the achievement and attendance of the pupils. She requested that the teacher's contract be drawn up for one year instead of three months; a request the Board agreed to and a practice which became a permanent policy with them although it had little effect in keeping teachers for longer periods of time for some years to come. Miss Walsh's report for the spring term of 1917, showed an average attendance of 9.5 with a percentage attendance of 75.28, the school being kept open for 110 days. The fall term of that year with an enrollment of 13 pupils showed an average attendance of 9.44 and a percentage of 82.3, school being kept open for 84 days. The grades taught with the number of pupils in each grade were: Grade I - 1 pupil, Grade IV - 1 pupil, Grade V - 3 pupils, Grade VI - 4 pupils, Grade VII - 3 pupils, and Grade VIII - 1 pupil.²⁸

By this time pupils wishing to continue their schooling in the high school grades could do so by attending at Strathmore where Grades up to XI were

taught. Most pupils on completing Grade VIII however, left school to assist with farm operations at home.

The persistently difficult matter of having the janitor work satisfactorily done arose during the period when one of the lady teachers refused to do the work. To solve the problem the Board hired one of the older boys to do the fire-lighting and other duties of a caretaker which included such tasks as sweeping the floor, dusting and generally keeping the grounds in order. For such services, the Board paid 15 cents per day but results were not satisfactory. The chief problem was that of getting the fire started in winter. Too frequently the only results after a half hour's work was a roomful of smoke and very little heat. This matter of trying to cope with a stubborn heater was at times an unsurmountable problem to many of the female teachers who on many occasions found it necessary during the winter months to massage heat into half the frozen hands and feet of small children who had walked or ridden several miles in sub-zero weather on horseback or in a horse drawn vehicle. To improve upon the heating, the Boards had several times considered putting a basement under the school and installing a furnace but had as often postponed the project for financial reasons.

The Problem of Teacher Turnover

A problem constantly before the school Boards of the early period was that of obtaining the services of a suitable teacher, regardless of qualifications. For the first few years most of the available teachers were those from the Eastern provinces which meant that considerable time was involved in getting a teacher to fill a position. It meant too, that

they were unaccustomed to conditions of the early West. Many of them could not adjust themselves to the new way of life and resigned their positions within a couple of months or even weeks after assuming duties. As time went on, however, the Boards could appeal to several sources in their attempt to secure a teacher. These included:

- a. an advertisement in the Montreal Star Weekly Herald
- b. an advertisement in the Calgary Herald
- c. an appeal to the Inspector of Schools
- d. an appeal to the Normal School in Calgary
- e. an appeal to the Canadian Teachers Agency in Calgary which kept a list of available teachers.

The problem of retaining teachers was further emphasized by the nature of the agreement drawn up between the contracting parties. Due to the uncertain financial conditions of the districts and to the unsuitability of many of the teachers for the positions, agreements were made for a short term only, usually three months, since the Government at that time required that teachers be paid at least every three months. The war too had its effect upon the supply and tenure of teachers, especially male teachers. Until after the war all school boards were faced with a rapid turn-over of teachers. In the 14 years between 1904 and 1918 the Cheadle Board hired seventeen teachers of whom two remained for one and one-half years, eight remained for one year each, three for six months each and one for three months. One teacher, after signing an agreement was unable to fulfill her contract after arrival because she could not find a suitable place to board, there being no teacherage in connection with the school until a much later date. The salaries paid ranged from an

annual salary of \$400 paid to Miss Meikle in 1904, to one of \$1000²⁹ paid to Miss Coneybear in 1918, for the teaching of Grades 1 to 8.

The Strathmore School during the period from 1908 to 1918 and operating from one to four rooms hired 19 teachers for elementary and high school, and 7 principals. Of the 19 teachers, one remained with the Board for 4 years, two for 2 years each, nine for 1 year, three for 6 months and four for 4 months, or less. The salary range for these teachers was from \$650 per year paid to Miss McKeen in 1908 to \$840 per year paid in 1918. Miss Bolton who remained with the Board for four years was paid \$1000 in 1918 in recognition of her services. During the same period, of the seven principals hired, two remained with the Boards for two years each and five remained for one year each. The salary range for the principals was from \$800 per year paid to Mr. Spicer³⁰ in 1910 to \$1400 paid to Mr. Reynolds in 1918.

The Crowfoot School district also experienced a rapid exchange of teachers from the time of opening in 1912 to 1918, during which period twelve teachers were hired only one of whom remained for a period of over eight months. Of the others, four remained for 6 months and seven remained for 3 months or less. The salary paid in this district ranged from \$600 paid in 1912 to \$800 paid in 1918. During these six years the school was closed on several occasions due largely to the Boards' prompt dismissal of a teacher when she proved unsatisfactory.³¹

29

School Board Minutes, Cheadle, S.D., Vol. 1, pp. 12-131.

30

School Board Minutes, Strathmore School District, Vol. 1, pp. 10-279.

31

School Board Minutes, Crowfoot School District, Vol. 1, pp. 14-75.

CHAPTER IV

THE PERIOD OF EXPANSION 1919 - 1944

Following World War 1, the Strathmore area experienced, as did other areas of the West, a period of prosperity and growth which coupled with the advancement of science and invention, brought about for the people of town and rural communities a much improved standard of living and a general improvement in education.

Economic and Social Changes of the Period

At the War's end thousands of men and women of all walks of life returned to their respective home districts with the purpose of taking up life where they had left off or with the hope and determination of starting a new life. Added to these was the influx, in the early twenties, of thousands of United States and European immigrants, many of whom, in making Canada their new home, became farmers. Land was in great demand and hitherto large tracts of land, formerly uncultivated, were surveyed into farms and sold. Other large tracts of land, formerly leased and used for the purpose of cattle ranching, were broken up into smaller acreages and sold to be used as grain growing and mixed farming enterprises. It has been estimated that previous to 1919, only one acre in ten of the arable land in Alberta had been brought under cultivation.¹

Accompanying this boom in land sales was a tremendous demand for farm products, especially wheat, by the countries of war-torn Europe where farm life of many of the countries had been disrupted by the war.

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The Strathmore Standard. July 23, 1919.

Until European agriculture could be re-established, Canadian economy boomed with the price of wheat rising to unprecedented heights. The result was that town and rural residents experienced a period of prosperity which was further enhanced by many new conveniences made possible by the advancement of science.

Chief among the developments which played a vital part in the growth of the West by virtue of its speeding up communication and the breaking down of rural isolation was the automobile, which by 1919 had been developed into a practical and efficient vehicle. With increased purchasing power in the hands of the people the automobile soon became a matter of common property and the livery barn of the small town was soon to give way to the garage. With the advent of the automobile came an urgent demand for better roads and the municipalities spent large sums of money upon the grading of low-lying stretches of road and installation of bridges and culverts.

Forward strides were made at this time, too, in another form of communication; that is, the telephone. Telephone installation had been slow in the province until the Government of Alberta took over the Bell Telephone interest in 1908, when the government announced that its policy was to extend to long distance and rural telephone lines where none existed.² As people began to realize the value of the telephone as an instrument of commercial and social intercourse, the number of subscribers increased rapidly, especially in the town communities. In Strathmore, telephone service began in 1909, when the Alberta Government Telephones installed a long distance exchange in the King Edward Hotel.

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Ibid., May 11, 1939.

A local day service was opened in 1910 and the first rural service was started in 1912, with the result that within one year there were fifty-six local and thirty-eight rural subscribers. It was not until after World War 1, however, that rural service was extended to all rural areas.³

Another convenience of modern living and one which in time was to be greatly extended following the first war was that of electrification from hydro-electric services. Many towns previous to World War 1 did have their local generators which supplied business places and some of the residences with electricity but the service was not very satisfactory. After World War 1, however, many towns became linked with newly installed hydro-electric lines. A successful campaign for a central power station to supply electricity was conducted in Strathmore by Mayor H.W. Bell. As a consequence a central power station was inaugurated in 1926 by the United Electric and Engineering Company. In 1928, the property of this company which had obtained its power from the Bassano Dam project, was bought by the Calgary Power Company and Strathmore was linked with its province-wide hydro-electric system. At that time rural electrification, with its costly installation of power lines, was not made available to country residents although farms located along the power lines were able to take advantage of it by merely being connected to the system. The depression and drought years of the 'thirties and later the Second World War interfered to delay rural electrification.⁴

Among other developments of the period was radio. Broadcasting

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The Strathmore Standard. May 11, 1939.

4

The Strathmore Standard. March 14, 1923

stations CFAC and CFCN began broadcasting from Calgary in 1922. It wasn't long after that until many people of both town and rural communities were receiving regular daily broadcasts. Radio had strong appeal and before the end of the twenties a radio was considered a "must" in almost every home. In 1927, a third station, CJCJ, at the time of writing, known as CKXL came on the air. Radio proved a blessing in isolated areas where families were now able to bring the outside world into their homes. It soon came to have a great educational influence which in the writer's experience, has grown stronger with the passing years.

As a result of the changed conditions throughout the West, the post-war years through the 'twenties showed a marked improvement in many aspects of education. Chiefly these included a much greater pupil enrollment in the schools, especially in the high school grades, a greater supply of teachers who were not only better trained but who were better adapted to life in the West, longer periods of teacher service in each district, and higher salaries for all teachers.

Testimony to the increase in school population and to the increased desire among young people for further education was the summary of conditions made in the year end report for 1922 by John T. Ross, then Deputy Minister of Education for Alberta, in which he emphasized the point that while the number of pupils in Grade VIII at June 30, 1921 was 7,625, the number a year later was 9,787, an increase of 2,164. Furthermore he pointed out that at least one-third more pupils were enrolled in the high school grades. There being 7,509 enrolled in Grades IX to XII at June 30, 1921 and 10,762 a year later. Mr. Ross also commented on the fact that whereas three years previous it was difficult to find a one-room school

carrying on the work above Grade VIII there were in 1922 at least 286 one-room schools carrying on such work. He also gave more hope for a better teacher supply in the future since about one thousand teachers would graduate from Normal School in the coming year of 1923.⁵

In the Strathmore area, of the fifteen schools considered during the decade of the 'twenties, ten had not made it a practice to teach above the eighth grade. Of the remaining schools Strathmore and Cheadle were centres of sufficient size to have at least one room set up for high school purposes and taught through Grade XII. Two others, namely Serviceberry Creek and Crowfoot, were both teaching through Grade XI before 1930, while one school taught up to Grade IX.

Effects of the Depression

Though the decade of the 'twenties was one of comparative prosperity and growth, the decade to follow proved to be one of considerable poverty and hardship brought about by a world-wide economic depression and for the prairies of Western Canada, additional stress, owing to severe drought conditions. The Depression of the 'thirties affected all aspects of life and because of its severity resulted in changes which greatly altered their development. Among those aspects of life most profoundly influenced was that of education in Alberta.

During the 'twenties the Canadian West continued to produce at a war-time rate on an increased acreage until 1928 when a bumper crop was produced. The marketing of this crop intruded well into 1929 and collided with the oncoming depression, a feature of which was the piling up of huge surpluses of unwanted wheat. Wheat prices fell to unprecedented

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The Strathmore Standard, March 14, 1923

low levels and European governments came to the aid of their domestic agriculture, barring their markets against the influx of cheap overseas wheat. Farmers in food exporting countries faced ruin and Western Canada received a severe set-back in economic growth from which it would require years to recover.⁶

Accompanying the collapse of prices, the West experienced during the early 'thirties a period of drought which further added to the hardship of grain producers. The Strathmore district, along with other areas of the prairies, experienced the effects of the drought and depression. The town of Strathmore suffered a loss in population through loss of business establishments, while many farms in the surrounding area changed hands owing to financial distress. In many cases original homestead buildings were left vacant, the land being taken over by neighbouring farmers who wished to increase their acreage.

From lack of moisture in many areas the soil blew badly with the result that new farming methods were adopted with a view to saving the soil. In this respect the crisis of the period brought beneficial practices which have been maintained ever since. Straight grain farming gave away in most districts to mixed farming and land which formerly was used for wheat growing was used for the production of forage crops and hay. Milk, butter and eggs were produced for market in increasing quantities to add to the farmers' income or used as a means of barter at the trading store for groceries and other requirements. Better methods of farming were employed in the practice of crop rotation, strip farming and the increased use of irrigation where such was available. New and

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The Strathmore Standard, May 11, 1939

better types of machinery were used. The disc plow, which leaves a protective trash cover on the land, replaced the old moldboard plow which exposed the soil to heat and wind with disastrous results. Other farm developments followed as economic conditions improved. The combine harvester with its speed and economy of operation, replaced the older method of binding, stooking, and threshing, in which operations, many men were required to do the work. Mechanized farming became standard farming procedure.

Both the poor economic conditions of the 'thirties and the more improved and more efficient farming methods of the time had their effect upon the younger generation. Youth of the rural areas saw little hope in carrying on in the agricultural occupations. Work was scarce, the ranks of the unemployed reached gigantic proportions, and labour was cheap. Those young men and women who desired to start farming were faced with the problem of having no money with which to begin. Later in the decade, with mechanized farming, older children were no longer required to remain out of school to help at home during the busy seasons with the result that rural youth turned their attention to acquiring more education to enable them to enter other occupations. School attendance in the high school grades thus increased considerably. Here again, the writer observed that the lack of finances made it impossible for many to attend town and city high schools since this involved a heavy outlay of money for room and board as well as for tuition fees. The result was a strong demand for the teaching of high school work in the local one-room rural school where attendance during the 'thirties was very low in the elementary grades due to loss of rural population.

In the Strathmore area, whereas previous to the Depression only a few of the districts taught high school, by 1935, all schools except one were teaching one or more grades above the eighth. Of the ten schools previously teaching to Grade VIII, only four of them, those nearest the town of Strathmore, taught to Grade IX, while the remaining six without exception taught to Grade XI with from one to three pupils attending in each of the high school grades each year. The total number of pupils in attendance in each rural school during the depression varied from school to school from nine to twenty-five.⁷

It was with the purpose of overcoming the unsatisfactory conditions which had developed with respect to education in the province, especially in the rural areas, that the Social Credit government in 1937, introduced the system of the large school division. The system was originally planned to include only rural school districts but within a few years it involved town schools as well.

The Social Credit Party, under the leadership of William Aberhart, was formed in the early 'thirties. Following a whirlwind electioneering campaign it won the provincial election of August 22, 1935, with an outstanding majority, securing fifty-six of the sixty-five seats in the Legislature. Mr. Aberhart was made Premier and held as well the office of Minister of Education and that of Attorney-General. As Minister of Education, Premier Aberhart introduced Legislation which had an excellent educational effect. By enlarging the school districts, many rural children were offered opportunities unavailable before.⁸

⁷ Annual Returns. Strathmore School District, June 1935.

⁸ The Calgary Daily Herald, May 31, 1943.

The organization of divisional districts involved the closing of schools where the attendance was too small to warrant its operation and transporting the pupils to a neighbouring district or to a district set up as a small centre operated as a small graded school providing education through most of the high school grades. Transportation of pupils was accomplished by the hiring of privately owned vehicles or by the divisional board supplying its own buses and drivers. In some cases, too, the parents provided their own means of travel, in which case the divisional board paid them mileage. Where buses were employed each bus had its own route over which children were picked up in the morning and taken home after school. These children provided their own lunches.

School Districts Erected During the Period

Owing to the overcrowding of some schools due to the large increase of population following World War 1 the Department of Education sanctioned the erection of two school districts in the area. The districts erected were the Turner S.D. #3797 and the Glencairn S.D. #3879.

The Turner S.D. #3797

This district was officially erected by the Department on March 21, 1919.⁹ The first school board meeting following its erection was held on April 7, 1919, at which time the members decided upon a suitable site for the schoolhouse, the type of structure to be built and plans for the financing of the project.

The Board next purchased four acres of land at a price of \$60 per acre and secured the Department's approval of a \$3200 debenture loan

repayable over a ten year period. Financing the construction, equipping and the operating of a school was by this time not the problem which earlier rural school boards experienced since municipal districts had now been organized in settled areas and the board was only required to submit requisitions to the municipal districts in which land of the school district lay. The Board of the Turner School for the first year requisitioned \$840 from the Keoma Municipality and \$1260 from the Bow Valley Municipality to pay operating costs. Such requisition covered not only the operating costs but also the debenture payment and interest on the loan.¹⁰

School opened on May 3, 1920, with Miss Suitor being the first teacher. She was paid a salary of \$115 per month with the caretaking being done by a nearby resident for \$10 per month remuneration. Miss Suitor taught through the summer months of July and August with a two week holiday which was a common practice with many rural boards. In such cases the major holiday of two months was taken in January and February. Such practice relieved young children of the hardship of winter travel.

During the short summer holiday the Board completed work on the new school and the grounds. They had the schoolhouse painted, the grounds fenced and at the same time installed a Waterman-Waterbury heating system. Water for the school was hauled from a nearby farm until the fall when a well was drilled on the grounds.¹¹ Sanitary water dispensers were provided and all necessary supplies put in. The heating unit of the type the Board installed was at this time being put into many of the older schools in the 1920's, replacing the old ranch-style heater. It was by far the most satisfactory system used by any of the schools without a basement furnace. The unit consisted of a large furnace-like heater having a large firebox surrounded

¹⁰ School Board Minutes, Turner School District, Vol. 1, p. 6.

¹¹ Ibid., Vol. 1, pp. 11 and 15

by a circular metal jacket which provided for a circulation of hot air. Leading into the jacket directly from the outside was a fresh air duct. The large firebox with the circulation of warm fresh air was a great improvement over the older heater which had proved inadequate to the task of heating a large classroom.

During the next two years three teachers were employed in the district. Salary rate was \$1200 per year. In June of 1922, the Board hired Mr. E. Desson as teacher. He remained for three years. His salary, too, was \$1200 for each year of service with the janitor work being done by outside help. During his period of service he had the comforts of a teacherage which had been built when he was hired. During his service in the district the Board began the policy of issuing report cards on the pupils' progress. The cards were to be signed by the parents and returned immediately to the teacher.

When the Board advertised for a teacher in 1925, they had thirty-six applications. With teachers in plentiful supply the Board now considered only those who offered a first class certificate of training. Miss McLung received the appointment at a salary of \$1000 per year to teach Grades 1-VIII. The following year she was offered a hundred dollar raise if she would teach Grade IX. She complied and then remained for a third year at a further fifty dollar raise in pay in recognition of her services.

Testimonial to the increased value placed upon the broadening of education as well as to the value already placed upon the obtaining of better trained teachers, the Board of 1929, in advertising for a teacher, specified not only that the applicant have a first class certificate but that she have some experience.¹² She was also required to teach music as a school subject.

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School Board Minutes, Turner School District, Vol. 1, p. 80.

When the teacher hired did not include music as a regular subject, she was dismissed at the end of the year.¹³

With finances in a state of collapse, the Board of 1931 informed their teacher, who had served one year, that financial conditions were so bad that they were forced to reduce her salary to \$700 and that for the same reason there was a request that Grade X be taught in the school. The teacher refused to accept anything less than the minimum of \$840 allowed by the government. The Board finally agreed to this but stipulated that she would have to do the janitor work, pay for which was to be included in the allowed minimum. They promised, however, that she should receive the tuition fees of any Grade X students from outside the district. High school students within the district were not expected to pay this fee. The teacher refused to accept unless \$50 was paid her for the janitor work with the result that no agreement could be reached and the teacher was dismissed. Without advertising, the Board received fourteen applications from which they considered only those of first class certification. They accepted Miss Jean Wannacott. She was paid the legal minimum of \$840 which included pay for her doing the janitor work. She remained in the school for four years, during which time Grade X was offered.

During the summer of 1926, the Board, in order to improve the school and make it of greater use to the community as a social centre, had a twelve by twenty-four foot addition with basement annexed to the building. The basement was equipped with chemical toilets and washrooms while the main floor of the addition was equipped as a kitchen for use by the community during social functions. For many years the district had an active community

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Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 85.

club which sponsored regular dances and other social activities. To pay for this, the Board received government permission to obtain a \$1000 debenture loan repayable in ten equal annual installments. By way of further improvement at that time, the Board had a telephone installed in the school.¹⁴

Owing to the effects of the Depression, the Board found it difficult to make further improvements to the plant or even maintain it. Taxes were difficult to collect. In some instances they were not collected at all and were finally cancelled with the return of better times. Needed repair work and redecorating of the school were postponed until finances would permit. In 1932, the Board was forced to reduce its estimated requirement to nine hundred dollars from both municipalities, a six hundred dollar reduction, where it was to remain until the district was taken into the large division in 1938. There was, however, an increase made in payments by the municipalities in 1935 to \$1400 to cover much needed redecoration and repair.

Within a year after the Turner School became a part of the large school division, the teaching of Grade X was discontinued. The number of students in the Turner School during the ten years previous to 1939 was never high, there being an average of only 14 pupils per year in attendance. Of these, the number of high school students varied from one to two pupils in each of Grades IX and X.

The school was kept in operation by the Divisional Board until the late 1940's, teaching Grades 1 to IX, with comparatively small attendance. Following its closure the building was left in the community to be used for several years as a community centre.

The Glencairn S.D. #3879

This district was erected by the Department of Education on October 9, 1919.¹⁵ The first regular meeting of its Board was held in the home of Mr. H. Groves. At this meeting Mr. Groves was elected chairman of the board while Mr. A.E. Hildahl was elected secretary-treasurer, an office he was to hold as a board member until the affairs of the district were taken over by the Wheatland Divisional Board in 1942. This first meeting resulted in a request being sent to the Department for permission to obtain a \$4000 debenture loan for the building of a school-house and a loan of \$1200 to meet operating expenses until the first annual requisition of the Board could be obtained from the municipality. Both requests were granted.¹⁶

The school was built during the spring of 1921 at a cost of less than \$3000 while at the same time a well for water costing between two and three hundred dollars was drilled on the grounds. A sixteen by thirty-two foot horse stable was also built.¹⁷

School opened in September of 1921, with Miss Liliedahl as the first teacher. She was paid \$1200 per year which included pay for all caretaking with the exception of fire-lighting in winter. This task was performed by one of the older boys who was paid \$5.00 per month. Grades taught were from one to eight inclusive. High school pupils in the district attended classes at either Calgary or Strathmore with their fees being paid by the school district. At Strathmore, the fee was \$3.00 per pupil per month.

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Alberta Gazette, October, 1919.

¹⁶

School Board Minutes, Glencairn School District, Vol. 1, p. 4

¹⁷

Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 17.

Further improvements were made to the school in 1924, when, in response to requests made by teachers upon applying for positions in the district, a twelve by fourteen foot teacherage was built on the grounds. Later in the school year an addition was made to it since its original size proved too small for the incumbent teacher. At the same time a cellar was dug under the building. By way of further improvement the grounds were fenced and seeded to grass and a sixteen by sixteen foot addition was made to the stable.¹⁸

The school continued to teach through Grade VIII until the fall of 1932, when owing to economic conditions, the parents of the district felt that they could no longer afford to send their children away for their high school education. They requested that higher grades be offered in their local school district. Accordingly, in that year, Grade IX was made available and in the following year Grade X was also included with Grade XI being added in 1934.¹⁹

The high school grades were quite well attended. In the eight years Grade IX was offered, a total of twenty-eight pupils attended, with each year's attendance ranging from zero to six pupils. In Grade X, for the six years it was offered, there was a total enrollment of sixteen pupils with the same range of annual attendance. In Grade XI, for the five years it was offered there was a total enrollment of twelve pupils with each year's attendance ranging from zero to four pupils. The total school attendance during these years including elementary and high varied from a

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School Board Minutes, Glencairn School District, Vol. 1, pp. 51-54.

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Ibid., Vol. 1, pp. 95-105.

maximum registration of twenty-six in 1933 to twelve in 1939, when grades above the ninth were discontinued. The decrease in school population reflected the trend of decreasing rural population. Small farms were abandoned and incorporated into larger ones.

The offering of grades above Grade IX was discontinued in 1939 when the Wheatland Divisional Board made provision for them in other schools. By 1940, the total school population having fallen to only five pupils, the Wheatland Divisional Board closed the school. Provision was made for their education by having two of them attend the Cairnhill School which adjoined the Glencairn School District on the south and three of them attend the Orange Valley School which adjoined on the north.²⁰

In the matter of securing teachers, the Glencairn School Board appear to have been quite fortunate. With a good supply to choose from, all teachers were fully qualified with either second or first class certificates. Upon applying for a teacher to succeed Miss Liliedahl in 1922, the Board received sixteen applications. The teacher hired remained only until the end of the year; however, being forced to resign because of ill health. In the next four years, four teachers were hired, each remaining for one year. Then in September of 1927, the Board secured the services of Mrs. Ruth Chapman who remained in the district as teacher until the end of June, 1935. From September of that year until June, 1940, three teachers were hired, two of whom remained for two years each and one for one year.

Salaries over the entire period varied considerably in keeping with the economic conditions of the times. From 1921 to 1931, annual salaries ranged from \$1150 to \$1250 paid to Mrs. Chapman in 1931. In 1932, owing to

the Depression, her salary was reduced to \$1000 per year and further reduced to \$840 in 1933, at which level it remained until the school was closed in 1940. Agreements with respect to caretaking and teacherage rental varied slightly with different teachers but for the most part it was agreed that the teacher do the janitor work in return for free use of the teacherage with fuel.

In 1937, the Glencairn School District became a part of the Wheatland School Division in its initial organization, after which the local Board served in an advisory capacity only. Previous to the Division's incorporation, however, the Board members wishing to utilize the balance of funds to the advantage of the community from which they had been collected, acted to improve the school by constructing a basement under the building and by having a furnace installed. They also considered it to their advantage to purchase a piano for the school while control of the funds was still in²¹ their hands.

At a meeting held on November 5, 1938, and in accordance with Departmental regulations governing local district relations with the large divisions, the Board elected Mr. H. Groves as their official representative to the board of the large division. It was his duty to communicate the wishes of the people of his district to the Divisional Board and report upon conditions generally. Proceedings of local board meetings, with the exception of the annual meetings, were no longer recorded. The school continued as previously except that all business including the hiring of teachers was handled by the Divisional Board.²²

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School Board Minutes, Glencairn School District, Vol. 1, pp. 131 and 132.

²²

Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 133.

A matter of considerable concern to the district arose a few years later when in 1942, the Wheatland School Divisional Board proposed moving the schoolhouse to another district. At the annual meeting of the local Board held on February 3, 1942, the ratepayers unanimously opposed the removal of the building on the argument that it belonged to the District and that it should remain there to be used if necessary as a community centre. A motion was passed to this effect and the decision presented to the Divisional Board. The matter didn't end there, however. A special meeting was called by the Divisional Board for June 12, 1942, for further discussion of the matter. Present at the meeting were officials of the Wheatland School Division, Mr. M. McLeod, Superintendent of the Division, as well as a large gathering of residents of the Glencairn School District. The issue was hotly debated at some length until a motion was finally passed to the effect that the schoolhouse should be moved to its new site on condition that, should a school be needed in the future in the Glencairn District, the Wheatland School Division would supply one. The schoolhouse was moved to the site of the Orange Valley School four miles to the north, that building having been condemned as a schoolhouse. With regard to the piano recently purchased by the Glencairn District, it was decided to store it in a resident's home where it would be available should it be needed in the future for community use.²³

Progress of Education in the Established Schools During the Period

In the score of years beginning 1919 and ending with the formation of the Wheatland Division, rural schools of the area underwent gradual

changes in nearly all aspects of education. Though many of the changes were for the betterment of education generally there were those which, especially during the Depression, created some very undesirable conditions. Though conditions varied slightly in each District, the progress made in the Cheadle and Crowfoot schools may serve to illustrate what changes did occur which led finally to the incorporation of the rural schools of the area into a large division for administrative and educational purposes.

The Cheadle School--Previous to the end of World War 1, Cheadle had grown to a sizeable village consisting of two or three stores, a restaurant, a lumber yard, a livery barn, a blacksmith shop, and several residences, a community hall, and a good school. Following the war, however, because of its nearness to Calgary and Strathmore as well as the advent of the automobile and better roads, the village began to dwindle in size. The rural area of the community though, following its start as a ranching district, developed into a prosperous farming area with considerable increase in rural population.

The school continued to operate until 1926 as a one-room institution with a fairly large average yearly attendance of over thirty pupils. Then in December of 1926, the Board resolved to have Inspector F.G. Buchanan attend a special meeting of the ratepayers to give his views to the parents of the district on the matter of providing high school education in their school and to advise them about procedure toward that end. Following favourable comments from him, another special meeting of the ratepayers was held on January 29, 1927, at which it was decided to operate a two-room graded school.²⁴ One room was to be added to the existing schoolhouse to be used

as a classroom for grades seven to ten inclusive with the prospects of including higher grades in the future. Miss A. Girling, who was the teacher in the District, accepted the duty of teaching the higher grades and acting as principal of the new organization when school opened in the fall.²⁵ Miss Dawson was then hired to teach the lower grades of one to six. Salaries were to be \$1400 to the principal and \$1200 to the second teacher with both teachers doing the janitor work. The school was equipped in what the Board considered to be the most up-to-date manner, the grounds were improved with trees and a new water well was drilled thereon. A large addition was also made to the stable.²⁶

When school opened in the fall, high school pupils from surrounding districts were enrolled. The provision of a high school at this centre was a great benefit to resident and non-resident pupils of the Cheadle area since the Calgary schools and the high school at Strathmore were crowded to capacity. Furthermore, the saving in cost by having the children attend school locally made it possible for many children to continue in high school whereas otherwise they would probably have been required to leave school on completing Grade VIII or Grade IX. Fees charged at Cheadle were \$10 per year for elementary pupils and \$30 for high school grades per pupil. Grade XI was made available in the fall of 1931.²⁷

During the depression years of the 1930's the school population rapidly decreased in spite of the high school offerings. Against the advice of Inspector Edwards, the Board continued to operate the school on a two-room

²⁶

Ibid., Vol. 11, p. 25.

²⁷

Ibid., Vol. 11, p. 15.

basis. The total enrollment in the two rooms as of June, 1933, was thirty-five, there being twenty-one pupils in the room of Grades 1-VI and fourteen in the room of Grades VII-XI.²⁸

Determined to maintain their high school, the Board of 1934 resolved to operate on a full high school basis with one room of Grades 1-VIII and the senior room of Grades IX to XII. This arrangement qualified the District for the three dollars per day government grant provided by provincial legislation of 1934. This legislation allowed each district maintaining one or more rooms exclusively for pupils in grades above the eighth and with an average daily attendance of not less than fifteen pupils to be granted three dollars per day for each day the school was in operation.²⁹ The hope was that there would be a strong representation of high school pupils from the surrounding districts of Glencairn, Fairplay, Hervey, and Turner. In spite of an appeal to these districts for high school registrations, the number was disappointing because most of these districts were now offering high school to Grade X or even Grade XI, after which they attended at Strathmore or at Calgary.

The Cheadle School continued to operate on the two-room plan until June, 1937, when with only nine high school pupils in attendance to finish the school year and acting upon the advice of Inspector J. McGregor, the Board discontinued offering high school grades above the ninth grade. It opened the 1937-38 year with only one room teaching grades 1-IX inclusive.³⁰ During that

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Annual Returns, Cheadle School District, June, 1933.

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School Grants Act, Section 4(d), 1934.

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School Board Minutes, Cheadle School District, Vol. 11, p. 148.

year there were only ten pupils in attendance in those grades. High school pupils attended at Strathmore. The following year the Cheadle School became a part of the Wheatland School Division upon its organization, but it was kept open as a one-room school until the summer of 1940, when it was closed entirely and all pupils of the district were taken to Strathmore by bus at the expense of the large division.³¹

The Crowfoot School--During the 1920's and the 1930's, the Crowfoot School followed a pattern of development very similar to other rural schools in the area. The school was operated on a purely elementary basis until September, 1921, when the Trustees after securing permission from Inspector Ligget, added Grade 1X.³² Although Grade 1X was offered for the convenience of four students at the time it became a permanent feature of the school and was offered in those years when there was a request for it regardless of the number of pupils to be enrolled. Grade X was offered in 1930 from which time it was made available to any who requested it. Grade XI was offered in 1937 but the number of subjects offered was limited. In 1938, a few subjects of Grade XII were taught.³³

Teaching during the 1937-38 year must have been something of a problem for in that year there was a total of only twelve pupils registered in school with two pupils each of Grade I and IV and one in each of Grades II, III, V, VI, VII, IX, X, and XI. In the following year, the last year high school grades were offered, there were fifteen registered with two enrolled in each of Grades I, II, IV, VII, and XII and one in Grades III, V, VI, and VIII.³⁴

³¹

Ibid., Vol. II, p. 164.

³²

School Board Minutes, Crowfoot School District, Vol. I, p. 102.

³³

Ibid., Vol. I, p. 180.

³⁴

Annual Returns, Crowfoot School District, June, 1938.

The boards of trustees through the period appear to have been constant in their attention toward maintenance of the buildings and toward the provision of favourable working conditions within the school. However, they were faced with the problem of a dwindling school population within the district. In contrast to most school districts of the Strathmore area at this time, there were so few school age children in the District that the Board in September, 1927, were forced to close the school.³⁵ They kept it closed for two years. Those school age children who were in the District were required to attend in neighbouring districts.³⁶ By way of improvements during the 1920's, the Board of 1923 had trees planted around the grounds³⁷ and in June of the following year had an excavation dug under the schoolhouse and installed a pipeless furnace.³⁸ At this time, too, they had a telephone installed, payment for which was made by the Board until the mid-thirties, when the teacher was required to pay half the cost. During the two years that the school was closed the Board officials had the buildings painted and later in 1929, had a cement foundation placed under the schoolhouse and had the walls and floor of the basement finished with cement.³⁹ During the last year that control of funds was in the hands of the local board, the trustees purchased a piano⁴⁰ and further improved the school grounds by having swings and see-saws erected thereon.⁴¹

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School Board Minutes, Crowfoot School District, Vol. 1, p. 127.

³⁶

Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 130.

³⁷

Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 113.

³⁸

Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 120.

³⁹

Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 131.

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Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 177.

⁴¹

Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 181.

Following the incorporation of the District into the large Division, all pupils in high school grades above the ninth were sent to Strathmore with transportation and tuition expenses paid for by the Division. The school was kept open by the Divisional Board until 1945, when with the town of Strathmore becoming a part of the Wheatland Division, the Crowfoot School was closed and all pupils of the District were taken by bus to Strathmore which was organized as the centre for the area.

Over the score of years beginning 1920, due to a better supply of teachers, neither the Cheadle Boards or the Crowfoot Boards of Trustees were faced with the annoying problem of obtaining qualified, suitable teachers to the degree that previous boards had experienced, nor did they experience the same difficulty in retaining teachers for at least one year's duration of service. Over the period, the Cheadle School, operating for ten years as a one-room school and an equal number of years as a two-room school, hired a total of fourteen teachers. Of these, one teacher remained seven years, two for four years, two for three years, one for two years, and eight for one year each. Over the same period, the Crowfoot School, for the eighteen years it was in operation, hired ten teachers of whom one remained for a four year period, one for three years, three for a two year period and five for one year each.

Teachers' salaries in the Cheadle District varied from the \$1400 paid in the early 'twenties to a below the allowable minimum salary of \$700 paid during the mid-thirties until 1937 when the Divisional Board took over and raised all salaries to the minimum of \$840 at which figure it remained until the school closed. Pay for the principal ranged from one hundred to two

hundred dollars per year higher than that paid to the second teacher.⁴²

In the Crowfoot District during this period, salaries for teachers were very similar to those of the Cheadle District, ranging from \$1450 paid to Miss Smith in the 1920-21 school year to \$700 yearly salary paid during the depression years of 1934 to 1936. Some consideration was given, however, to teachers when they were required to teach above Grade IX, in that from fifty to one hundred dollars per year additional salary was usually granted.⁴³

In the matter of living accommodation for teachers, no teacherage was provided in the Cheadle District until 1933. This was provided furnished and rent free with fuel for the first two years. During the rest of the time, in spite of the low salaries paid, a rental of one hundred dollars per year was made of the teachers who occupied it. Janitor work in the Cheadle District was done for the most part by a person hired for the purpose and whose duties were carefully outlined. In the Crowfoot District, a teacherage was provided from the time the school was built. It was usually provided the teachers in return for their doing the janitor work in the school.

Progress of Education in the Strathmore District During the Period

The progress of education in the Strathmore School, though suffering a loss of pupils owing to the depression conditions of the 1930's, was one of fairly steady improvement in nearly all aspects of education.

Following World War I, the Strathmore School, which provided four classrooms, was proving inadequate in size to properly handle the increase in student population. With an increasing demand from the surrounding rural

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Annual Returns, Cheadle School, June, 1937.

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Annual Returns, Crowfoot School District, 1921-1936.

areas for pupil admission to high school grades, the school authorities were faced with the problem of enlarging the school and providing more high school accommodation. So acute was the problem of overcrowding that in the spring of 1919, the Board equipped the basement of the Methodist Church as a primary classroom as a temporary arrangement.

Wishing to extend high school facilities but at the same time being apprehensive of the rising cost of building improvement and supplies, the Board of 1919, published a notice to the ratepayers advising them of a special meeting to be held in the town hall to inform them of the additional costs involved in the enlarging of the high school and of the effect such costs would have upon taxes. This meeting was held on May 22, 1919, with a large and interested audience in attendance. During a lengthy debate upon the issue a few expressed the fear that to increase the high school would mean the taking of time from the lower grades. The majority favoured enlarging the school, arguing that since the town depended upon the surrounding rural areas for its business support a good high school education should be made available in the town. The gathering voted in favour of the project and the Board was instructed to proceed with plans for enlargement. Acting accordingly, the Board secured authority to issue a two thousand and five hundred dollar debenture loan and entered into contract with Mr. F. Hirtle, a local contractor, for the completion of the two upstairs rooms of the newer schoolhouse for the sum of two thousand eight hundred and fifty dollars, with work to be completed for the commencement of the fall term.⁴⁴

Before appointing the new staff for the 1919-20 school year, Mr. Lazerte

of the Department of Education, was asked to attend a special meeting of the Board for the purpose of advising them with respect to the organization of grades and the obtaining of a suitable staff. Complying with their request, Mr. Lazerte attended their meeting held on June 24, 1919, and advised them to employ two male teachers for Grades VII to XI, inclusive and three teachers for Grades I to VI inclusive, preferably female. He recommended salaries of \$1600 and \$1400 for the principal and vice-principal respectively and \$950 for each of the elementary teachers with adjustments according to qualifications and experience. Mr. Lazerte also promised to send advice on equipment necessary and suggested that approximately eight hundred dollars he spent for science equipment which was to be purchased immediately.⁴⁵

The Board asked all members of the existing staff to apply for positions under the new arrangement but only one teacher, Miss Bolton, did so. She was rehired at a salary of \$1100 per year to teach Grades V and VI. The larger salary offered her was in recognition of her long term of service in the school. For the high school grades, the board members were pleased to report that they had been able to secure the services of two well qualified men in the persons of Mr. C.A. Mackay and Mr. L.T. Williams as principal and vice-principal respectively. Mr. Mackay held a B.A. from Dalhousie University where he graduated with distinction in Mathematics and Science while Mr. Williams was a graduate of Queens' University having achieved Honours in his last year in English and History.⁴⁶

High School attendance that year was greatly increased, there being forty-six registered as compared with fourteen for the previous term. Subjects

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School Board Minutes, Strathmore School District, Vol. 11, p. 25.

⁴⁶

Ibid., Vol. 11, p. 34.

taught in the high school grades included Arithmetic, Reading, Literature, Spelling, Grammar, Art, Physics, Hygiene, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, Algebra and Manual Work.⁴⁷

In September, 1921, following the resignation of Mr. Mackay, Mr. Williams assumed the principalship, at which time, with a further increase in enrollment a sixth room was opened.⁴⁸ After one year, Mr. Williams resigned and Mr. R.L. Whitney was appointed principal.⁴⁹ Mr. Whitney remained as principal for four years of fine service. He was followed in this capacity by Mr. S.H. Crowther⁵⁰ who had been hired in 1924 as assistant principal to Mr. Whitney.⁵¹ Mr. Crowther remained as principal of the school until his death in 1951, during which time he established an outstanding record as principal, teacher and community worker. In 1928, the board hired Mr. I. Mackenzie, who after serving two years as a teacher, was appointed vice-principal and who, in the course of time was to establish a fine record of service in the school and the community of Strathmore.⁵²

Throughout the 'twenties there was a growing demand for high school admission from pupils without the town. As the demand grew stronger many of the applications were rejected because of the lack of accommodation. This created a problem which led to an increased demand for a new and larger high school. Action toward building a new school was repeatedly postponed; however, not only for financial reasons but also because of the frequent

⁴⁷

Ibid., Vol. 11, p.75.

⁴⁸

Ibid., Vol. 11, p. 106.

⁴⁹

Ibid., Vol. 11, p. 137.

⁵⁰

Ibid., Vol. 11, p. 291.

⁵¹

Ibid., Vol. 11, p. 215.

⁵²

Ibid., Vol. 11, p. 55.

proposals by interested groups as well as the Department of Education for the creation in Strathmore of a consolidated school which would include Namaka, Strathmore and a few local districts. Though the advantages of consolidation were well propounded, the many proposals offered were not acceptable to the Strathmore people on the grounds that Strathmore's contributions under the plans were much greater than was considered its share, considering the fact that the great advantage was to the other districts.

Tuition fees charged by the Strathmore Boards were not high, being only sufficient to cover actual costs. Until 1923, no charge was made for pupils above Grade VIII but due to new regulations at that time a charge of three dollars per month was made upon pupils attending from outside districts. The charge was made upon the districts from which the pupils came. For pupils below Grade IX a charge of sixteen dollars per year was made upon the pupils' parents.⁵³

The 1933-34 school year marked a milestone in the history of the school. For the first time, because of increased attendance in high school, the school operated with two rooms devoted entirely to high school grades. Fifty-nine pupils were registered in Grades IX to XII inclusive of which twenty-two were registered in Grade XII, thirteen in Grade XI and twelve in each of grades IX and X. The two-room high school was a feature of the Strathmore School until the Strathmore School District became a part of the Wheatland School Division in 1945, at which time the number of high school rooms was necessarily increased. In the same year, however, that the high school accommodation was increased, there was a reduction by one room in elementary accommodations owing to the diminished population of the town.⁵⁴

⁵³

Ibid., Vol. 11, p. 147.

⁵⁴

Ibid., Vol. 11, p. 179.

This room was not re-opened until 1940, when attendance in the elementary grades increased.

Beginning 1934 fall term, because of financial difficulties, the number of rooms was reduced from six to five. There were slightly over two hundred pupils in the school, sixty six of whom were in the two high school rooms. Thus, there was considerable overcrowding in the elementary rooms. In spite of this, however, the school remained on a five-room plan until the summer of 1940, when the sixth classroom was re-opened to accommodate elementary pupils from surrounding rural schools which were being closed following the formation of the large division. Tuition for them was paid for by the Divisional Board at the rate of thirty dollars per year.⁵⁵

By 1940, the high school rooms as well as the elementary were becoming overcrowded and there were increasing demands for the erection of a larger and more up-to-date schoolhouse. The school boards were well aware of the need and seriously considered building a better school. Interested, too, were the trustees of the Wheatland School Division, who were desirous of obtaining high school accommodation to fulfill the ever-increasing demands of rural youth for more high school education. The project was delayed, however, not only because of the financial outlay at a time when financing was difficult but also for the reason that the Wheatland School Division was providing for the high school needs of their rural students by extending high school facilities within their own school system. At Kathryn, a village some twenty-five miles north-west of Strathmore, the Division provided dormitory facilities for some thirty pupils and provided for their education there.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ School Board Minutes, Strathmore School District, Vol. 1V, p. 58.

⁵⁶ The Strathmore Standard, February 15, and March 7, 1940.

Many of the high school students from the Strathmore rural area attended at Kathryn where they received much of their high school instruction. Thus with six rooms operating to capacity, building improvements in Strathmore were delayed pending further developments.

In spite of the lack of facilities, the Strathmore school trustees of 1939, in keeping with the trend of broadening education through the addition of optional subjects to the curriculum and in response to many requests, introduced Typing as an option for those students who planned a business career. For this they purchased initially four typewriters and sectioned a part of one of the high school rooms for their use. Mr. Mackenzie instructed in the course, which proved to be a very popular option with the students in the years to follow.⁵⁷

Again in spite of the lack of proper facilities but in keeping with educational trends, the Strathmore Board in 1940, initiated plans for the inclusion of General Shop and Home Economics as a further supplement to the courses already offered. For advice and information on the matter they invited Dr. Carpenter, Department Supervisor, to address them at a special meeting. He advised them about the requirements of the courses and approved of their proposals, providing a suitable accommodation could be obtained for their instruction. Mr. Ian Mackenzie, vice-principal, was appointed to investigate the availability of suitable classroom space and to submit to the Board an estimation of the equipment required and the probable cost involved.⁵⁸ For the Home Economics classes plans were first made to hold classes in the dining room of the Memorial Hall but this was declared unsuitable by Dr. Carpenter. A more suitable accommodation was found elsewhere. Accommodation

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School Board Minutes, Strathmore School District, Vol. 1V, p. 63.

⁵⁸

Ibid., Vol. 1V, p. 71.

for the Shop classes was provided for in the basement of the Masonic Hall which was renovated to meet requirements.⁵⁹

In June, 1944, the Strathmore School District joined the Wheatland School Division and the following year the town of Strathmore was made the administrative and distributive centre for the whole Division. Many of the rural schools were closed in the Strathmore area and the pupils from them were taken by bus to the Strathmore School where provision was made for them by moving schools from rural districts to the Strathmore School grounds. Strathmore, thus, became the "centralization" for that area of the Wheatland School Division.

Following amalgamation with the large Division the Strathmore Board ceased to function except as an advisory body. Regular meetings with the exception of the annual meetings were no longer held. Of chief concern to the ratepayers at the annual meetings appears to have been the matter of securing a proper and permanent school building to alleviate the overcrowding of classrooms and to provide adequate classroom facilities. To this end, constant pressure was brought to bear upon the Divisional Board with the argument that Strathmore students attending classes in various schoolhouses assembled upon the school grounds suffered inconvenience as a result of their district becoming a part of the larger unit. Delay in construction of a suitable school plant by the Division was due, in part, to the scarcity of building materials occasioned by the war.

Throughout this period of expansion, as in the previous period, school boards of the Strathmore District appear to have been constant in their

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Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 81.

attention to the proper maintenance and improvement of the school grounds, buildings and equipment. A genuine interest appears to have been shown also in providing those facilities and teaching aids necessary to keep the learning situation of the children in line with educational developments.

In 1924, a modern heating system was installed in each of the schools. These provided for a better circulation of air and maintained a more constant temperature than was previously attained. Fire alarms were installed and the principal was required to call at least one drill each month. The town fire department took an active interest in helping to prevent fire and promoted safety in this respect by beginning the practice of fire inspections. They later provided the schools with fire extinguishers for use in emergencies and gave instruction as to their proper care and use.⁶⁰

In 1925, the school board purchased two lots adjacent to the school grounds to provide extra space for soccer field and baseball diamonds for increasing number of high school students. They also provided swings and see-saws for the younger children. In this same year, after many years of trying to cope with the problems of finding a suitable residence for the janitor, they built a cottage for him on the grounds.⁶¹ In 1928, a stable was built to shelter the many horses. This satisfied a long standing demand by the parents of children who rode or drove to school. In keeping with developments the year 1927 marked a great advance in school advancement and improvement with the installation of electric lights in both school buildings and in the janitor's house. This was a greatly superior method of lighting than the old coal oil and gasoline lamps provided previously.⁶²

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School Board Minutes, Strathmore School District, Vol. 11, p. 221.

61

The Strathmore Standard, February 11, 1925

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School Board Minutes, Strathmore School District, Vol. 111, p. 32.

Owing to the Depression of the early 'thirties there was some curtailment in improvement in those years though in 1935 the school grounds underwent much needed improvement as the grounds were fenced and bordered with trees. Also in that year the high school room was improved to the extent that cabinets and work tables were installed for the keeping and use of the increasing supply of science equipment. By way of further improvement in the decade, cement sidewalks were laid from the business section of the town to the school to replace the boardwalk and cinders previously used.

In the matter of maintaining and equipping the classrooms in keeping with educational trends, the Boards through the years appear to have been quite conscientious. In 1927, a new or a better piano was purchased and placed in the primary building for junior grade instruction in music. In the same year the Board also purchased a gramophone for the purpose of teaching music appreciation. In the beginning, records for the machine were borrowed from the Department of Education. Delivery charges were paid by the School Board. At this time, too, with some interest being shown by educational authorities in visual education as a means of instruction, the Board agreed to the requests of the teaching staff and rented a movie projector from the Department. To demonstrate the value of the gramophone and the projector to the Board members, the principal and staff invited the trustees and their wives to a demonstration of the use of the machines with the added view of persuading the board to purchase a movie projector for the school. In the next two years some twenty dollars were spent on gramophone records. It was almost ten years, however, before a movie projector was acquired. In 1938, with greater stress being put upon visual education as an effective medium of education in the Province, the Board purchased one.

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Films for use with the machine were borrowed from the Department. The practice of obtaining films from the Department has remained common procedure with nearly all schools in the Strathmore area since the cost of them is high.

Also in keeping with educational trends, the School Board of 1938, purchased a radio for the school so that teachers could avail themselves of radio broadcasts designed as an aid to teaching. School broadcasts began in Alberta in 1938 when the Minister of Education appointed a committee on radio education to consider introducing broadcasts into Alberta schools. The committee decided to begin with one elementary music series to see how well the programmes were liked before more were added. The broadcasts proved so popular that in the next year two additional series were added. These were news and music for intermediate grades, both given during classroom time. The purposes of the broadcasts were threefold. In the first place, they were intended to teach children how to use the radio for the best effect; to teach them to listen, appreciate and evaluate since by this time the radio was a well established medium of communication. In the second place, they were intended to assist in the classroom by way of supplementing the program and giving stimulus to the course for which they were planned. A third purpose was to encourage through radio an interest in the affairs of the community and the world at large and in this way inculcate a sense of civic and social responsibility. School broadcasts soon became a part of the program of most schools in this area.

The School Broadcast Hour was begun by the Department in 1947, with broadcasts being given from two to three o'clock each day throughout the week. These included music, singing games, rhythmic and stories in the elementary grades and music, science, literature, vocational guidance, French, social studies and news for the Junior and Senior High School grades. Some of the programs were arranged in cooperation with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. To assist teachers in planning their school work, ⁶⁵ broadcast guides were published and sent out to schools.

During the period, some thought, too, was given by the Strathmore Boards to the improvement of classroom libraries. Owing to the fact that all the information that students were required to obtain came from strictly prescribed textbooks in the early years, libraries were not considered important as a part of school equipment as they have been in more recent years. Those supplementary books that were supplied, though varied in content, were of hit and miss selection. The Board of 1925, in order to add to the school library shelves, made a request through the local paper that parents and others assist the pupils in building a reading library by sending to the school any books which they thought may be suitable for classroom reading ⁶⁶ and for which they no longer had any use. This brought a reasonable response for a number of years and a fairly large number of books were added to the shelves of the classrooms. All books were carefully reviewed by the teachers before they were put into the libraries. In 1930, the Board bought bookcases and placed one in each room and added to the variety of reading material by

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School Broadcasts Branch, Bulletin, March 20, 1948.

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The Strathmore Standard, October 28, 1925.

purchasing subscriptions to the magazines Out Door Life and the Canadian Geographic Magazine. Books were bought for the classrooms from time to time in accordance with teachers' requests. Orders for such books were passed upon in Board meetings when requests were made. In 1941, a set of Junior Britannica Encyclopedia was placed in the library of the senior room. In the same year the Board also bought library books to the extent of twenty dollars per classroom. Selection of books was made by the teachers. The Board also recommended that this sum be allowed each year toward the purchase of supplementary reading material. They also voted that a card system of filing library books be started and bought necessary material for the purpose.

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Another matter commanding the attention of the Strathmore School Trustees during the two decades following World War I was that of improving the health of the school children. With the passage in 1919 by the Provincial Legislature of the Public Health Act, the matter of improving the health of school children took a big stride forward. This created the Department of Public Health and gave it authority and responsibility for administering all the Statutes of the Government relating to health. Previous to 1919, the matter of public health in Alberta had been first a branch under the Department of Agriculture, then through 1918 and 1919, it was placed successively under the Department of Provincial Secretary and the Department of Municipal Affairs. With the passage of the Act, Alberta became the second province of Canada to create a Ministry of Health.

The work of the new department was divided into well-defined divisions

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School Board Minutes, Strathmore School District, Vol. IV, p. 92.

or branches, one of which was the Division of Public Health Nursing. This Division was established in 1918 with four nurses on the staff. By 1939, however, it had grown to about thirty nurses doing various types of public health work. Of these, a small group served small town and rural areas. They held child welfare clinics, visited schools, held nursing and first aid classes, visited the homes, lectured to the public and in general cooperated with physicians and local health authorities to bring about better health for all.

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When the division of Public Health Nursing was organized in 1919 as a branch of the Department of Health, the Strathmore School Trustees applied for the services of a public health nurse and secured the help of Miss E.M. Gimbey; one of ten nurses serving in this capacity. Such services were supplied at one half the cost to the schools which in the case of Strathmore amounted to sixty dollars for the year. Miss Gimbey was to supply medical health inspection and make recommendations for improvement. The Trustees equipped the school with the necessary supplies for her. She made her first visit in May, 1920, at which time she inspected the children. Her second trip was in January of 1921, when she reported an improvement in the health of the children generally. Following her report that some sixty children suffered from defective teeth, the Board agreed to engage a dentist, one of those employed with the Calgary School Board and have him follow up with the necessary dental work. Following her suggestion also, the Board took steps to improve the drinking water supply by providing sanitary drinking

cups and more sanitary water containers in the classrooms.

In 1923, the visiting nurse, Kate Brightly, made two visits to each school in her district which included the town of Strathmore. She explained to the public that each nurse had a district of from twenty to twenty-five schools, that each nurse had her own conveyance and that the charge for her services for the year was ten dollars for each school of twenty or fewer pupils while for a school of higher enrollment than twenty pupils the per capita fee was reduced in proportion to the enrollment.

The problem of a dental health survey was resolved when Dr. McIntyre of Calgary made an agreement with the Strathmore Trustees to inspect the teeth of the children free of charge on condition that any dental work required would be done by him.

At this time the Department of Health took another step toward the improvement of children's health by the organization of travelling clinics. These were organized to meet the urgent need for medical, dental and surgical attention for children living in remote areas not served by medical services. The personnel of the clinics included a surgeon, an anaesthetist, dentists, and nurses. The Department of Health offered the Strathmore Trustees the services of the travelling clinic for the town school as well as those of the surrounding districts. The Strathmore Board, though considered such work of vital importance to the rural schools, decided against having the clinic visit Strathmore because the town did have a local doctor and nurses available to attend to their school's needs. In 1929, a Child Welfare Clinic was held in Strathmore but it was sponsored by the local United Farm Women's Association. The School Board cooperated in the effort but were not

obligated financially.

During the decade of the 'thirties, a great amount of work was done in public health education, not only by the Department of Public Health Education but also by the other divisions of the Department of Health. The result was an increased health consciousness. Such educational work was carried out through lectures, motion pictures, radio talks, the issuing of bulletins, newspaper articles and otherwise. Before the end of the decade, health studies were also an important part of the school studies. In 1936, an addition to what was already being done in the elementary grades of 1 to VII, Health Education was introduced as a Grade IX course and two years later, in 1938, was added to the Grade X course of studies. It has since come to hold a prominent place in the school programme. Such courses have been supplemented by school nurse classroom lectures and by bulletins and posters for classroom use.

Another service offered by the Department of Health and one of great benefit to children were programmes of inoculation against communicable diseases and of quarantine. Strathmore School Boards did not subscribe to these programmes because they had their own practitioner. A regular program of health services for all of the pupils of the Strathmore area did not come until 1943, when the Wheatland Health Unit was set up to care for all pupils of the Wheatland School Division.

Other aspects of educational development that came under the scrutiny of the Trustees during these years were those of pupil attendance and academic achievement.

In 1925, the Board required that the teachers issue monthly report cards showing the progress and attendance of all pupils in their classes. These reports were to be signed by parents and returned to teachers as promptly as possible. An announcement from the School Board was published in the local newspaper urging the parents to cooperate in this matter. In their first announcement, the Board expressed regret that there was no parent-teacher association to bring about a closer contact between the teachers and the parents. However, they hoped that the reports would go a long way toward bringing about a better understanding of what the school was attempting to do and that cooperation in the matter of the report cards would be a great help in making the year a more successful one for the pupils. In 1926, the requirement regarding the issuance of reports was modified to the extent that though the cards should be sent monthly for the pupils of the elementary grades as before, cards for the senior grade pupils be issued at the end of every second month. The policy of issuing pupil report cards has been maintained to the present and has always been regarded as providing an important link between home and school.

The excessive amount of time missed by pupils who were kept at home to help with harvest operations which lasted from four to six weeks, and the increasing absenteeism among the smaller children led the staff and

71

The Strathmore Standard, October 7, 1925.

72

Ibid., October 6, 1926

principal in the fall of 1927, to request of the Trustees that excuse notes explaining the cause of the pupil's absence be required of parents whenever their children remained out of school. Following the Teacher's explanations of the serious absentee situation, the Trustees regulated that such notes be mandatory for all absences and that valid reasons must be given for pupils allowed to remain out of school. The practice proved effective and has been adhered to since.

As a further means of maintaining good attendance, School Boards for several years were in favour of offering special inducements to the children. During 1926, the Trustees had given a half-day holiday to the classroom having the best attendance for the month of October and had given a prize of ten dollars to the pupil having the best attendance at the end of the year. The policy of giving a sum of money to the pupil having the best attendance for the year became customary for many years to come. Periodic reports were made by the principal on attendance as well as other aspects of the progress of the various class rooms. Mr. Crowther attended School Board meetings quite regularly and was responsible for many such practices being inaugurated. In 1929, a further inducement to better attendance was made when at Mr. Crowther's request, the Board agreed to give a book to the pupil in each classroom who had made the best attendance for the year.

In the matter of the teachers and trustees attempting to improve academic achievement of pupils, though much was accomplished through the report cards, further inducement was proposed by Mr. Crowther in the Annual Ratepayers Meeting of January 1930. Following his report made in person to the ratepayers, he asked the Trustees if they would consider giving

prizes to students making honours on their final examinations. The Board gave favourable consideration to his request and passed a motion to the effect that a book be given to each student who passed his grade with very high standing and who was recommended for a prize by the principal. They also recommended that this be a practice of future boards. 74

In the same meeting of January, 1930, Mr. Crowther also asked the Board if they would consider setting up a scholarship fund for the purpose of making an annual scholarship to assist worthy students of the Strathmore High School who wished to proceed with their studies following graduation from high school. The request resulted in the formation of a temporary committee of three consisting of Mr. Crowther and two Board members to investigate such a possibility. The work of the committee led to the formation of a permanent scholarship committee consisting of the Mayor, School Board Chairman and the School Principal. It was the hope of the committee to raise, through contributions and otherwise, a sum of one thousand dollars to serve as a fund, the interest from which could be used to provide an annual scholarship. Though it was not possible to raise the desired sum at that time, the committee did find it possible, with interest from the fund established and from donations, to promise for that year a scholarship of fifty dollars to the most deserving graduate. As years went by, high school students also assisted in maintaining the scholarship through money raised in extra-curricular activities. The first award of fifty dollars was made to Mr. Normal Ellis who upon graduation entered the Calgary Normal School in 1931. At the time this award was made the Strathmore School was

considered the only small high school in the province which had established a fund for this purpose. Conditions governing the awards were:

1. All winners must proceed to some vocational or professional institution within twelve months of the award.
2. Any applicant proceeding to any other high school will not be eligible for the award.
3. The committee in charge reserves the right to withhold the awarding of the scholarship in any one year.
4. All those who may be eligible for the scholarship must notify the principal before the middle of May.
5. The award, if any, to be made by the committee in September.
6. Awards to be made on scholarship forty percent, character twenty-five percent, outside activities twenty percent and special circumstances fifteen percent.

The presentation of the scholarship was maintained until the Strathmore District became a "centralization" of the Wheatland School Division in 1945, although the amount of the award sometimes fell below the original of fifty dollars. In 1937, the amount of thirty-two dollars was awarded to Andrew Garret.

As it was necessary through the period to improve the school buildings and grounds, acquire up-to-date equipment and to improve pupil attitude toward the acquisition of better academic achievement, so too was it necessary in attaining that goal, to improve the most important factor of all,

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The Strathmore Standard, October 10, 1935.

76

Ibid., October 3, 1938.

the teachers themselves. In this respect reasonable progress appears to have been made in acquiring more highly qualified teachers, longer tenure of teaching position, better payment for teacher services and greater use of teacher talents and special qualifications.

Though teacher qualifications during the pioneer period were not high, little improvement in this respect was evident in Strathmore until the mid-twenties. In 1923, of the six teachers on the staff, three were teaching on permit. Of these, one was required to terminate her agreement with the Board, one was given an extension and was able to teach another year upon improving her standing, while the third had still another year before her permit expired. In the High School the situation was better, both teachers being certified.

Indicative of a greater supply of better qualified teachers for the future was the fact that in 1925, five graduates of the Strathmore High School entered Normal School. Three of these registered in training for First Class and the others for Second Class certification.⁷⁷ A further promise of improved teacher qualification came in 1927, when five teachers of the Strathmore staff announced their intention to attend summer classes in teacher training.⁷⁸ By 1930, all teachers on the staff held Second Class certificates while the principal had First Class certification. (Second Class certification indicated that the teacher had completed Grade XI before entering Normal School, while First Class certification indicated that

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Ibid., October 7, 1935.

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The Strathmore Standard, July 27, 1927.

Grade XII had been completed before teaching training had begun. It was possible to raise one's certification from Second Class to First by completing Grade XII and taking additional teacher training courses through attendance at Summer School. At this time many teachers raised their qualification by this method.)⁷⁹ In 1935, of the five teachers, three held First Class certificates and the remainder Second Class.⁸⁰ The same condition existed in 1939 but by this time the Strathmore Trustees were hiring new teachers with not less than First Class certificates.⁸¹

In the matter of teacher supply, though teachers were difficult to obtain previous to the close of World War I, there appeared to be little difficulty on the part of the Strathmore Trustees in securing teachers during the early 'twenties and in the score of years to follow. In 1924, to fill three vacancies, there were ninety applications received. In 1925, there were twenty-two applications received in response to one advertisement for a teacher of primary grades,⁸² while in 1927 there were fifteen applications in response to an advertisement for a teacher of intermediate grades. In 1941, in spite of wartime conditions, there were thirty-five applications to fill one vacancy in the elementary level.⁸³ Conditions in the rural areas were similar with respect to availability of teachers over these years. Many of the teachers in the Strathmore School as well as several in the rural schools of the immediate area were former pupils of the Strathmore High School.

79

Annual Returns, Strathmore School, June, 1930.

80

Ibid., June, 1935.

81

Ibid., June, 1939.

82

School Board Minutes, Strathmore School District, Vol. 11, p. 255.

83

Ibid., Vol. 111, p. 94.

With the greater supply of teachers there was also a great improvement in the length of time a teacher remained in a district. Though in 1919, in Strathmore there was a ninety percent turnover of teachers, there was in each succeeding year an exchange of only a half of the staff until 1925. From 1925 until 1928, there was an exchange of one to two teachers at the end of each year and from 1928 until 1938, the staff remained the same except for two changes due to resignations. In this respect, too, the rural schools experienced longer tenure of position by their teachers.⁸⁴

In addition to placing greater emphasis upon more highly qualified teachers, the trustees and school officials during the period, showed an awareness of the educational benefits obtainable through the utilization of appropriate teacher talents and special qualifications.

Previous to 1925, the Boards, when they experienced difficulty in securing a suitable teacher to fill a vacancy, had appealed to the Inspector of Schools for their District for assistance and recommendation in their efforts to secure a well qualified and suitable applicant. Since the Inspector was not always well acquainted with the situation and the particular needs of the school, the practice often resulted in delay and sometimes disappointment. In an attempt to overcome this, the Trustees in 1925, especially requested the principal to assist them in making teacher selections from applications, and if possible, from his acquaintances seeking a position who would be best qualified to fill a particular vacancy. This practice became standard policy with all future Boards and Mr. Crowther was regularly called upon to act as advisor in this capacity.

In 1930, the Trustees set the policy of making an agreement with a local resident, qualified as a teacher, to act as a substitute for teachers who were required to take time off because of illness or some other reason. This person was hired at the beginning of the school year and was usually a married woman and an ex-teacher. She was also required at this time to act as relieving teacher for Mr. Crowther upon two half-days per month, during which time Mr. Crowther was expected to visit other classrooms for the purpose of giving help and advice to staff members. Such visits were of help to the principal, too, in making recommendations to the Board at their meetings which he regularly attended.

In 1928, it was brought to the attention of the Board that owing to inadequate supervision on the playgrounds, students were being disorderly and even destructive. To counteract such conduct the Board requested that one teacher be appointed to supervise playground activities. Mr. McKenzie was given the task for which he received an additional \$50 per year in salary. When he assumed the position of vice-principal, the duty of playground supervision was given to Mr. Cameron, who was appointed to the staff at that time. In 1934, when one classroom was closed, Mr. Cameron extended his duties as playground supervisor to include the teaching of physical training in the spare room which was equipped by the School Board to the amount of twenty-five dollars. These classes were further extended to include night physical training classes, with help to Mr. Cameron, from interested local residents. They were continued until the room was brought back into use. His efforts earned for him the praise and thanks of the Board and community.

A further use of teacher talents was made in 1928, when at Mr.

Crowther's suggestion, Miss Folk was appointed by the Board to teach music through Grades 1 to VI in those classes whose teachers requested such help. This was done on a class exchange basis with the teachers concerned.⁸⁵ She was paid an additional fifty dollars per year on her salary. Later,⁸⁶ in 1935, Miss Folk assumed the duty of training the high school chorus.

Salaries for teachers over the two decades beginning with the year 1919 varied considerably, with salaries paid in Strathmore being slightly higher at all times than salaries paid in rural areas. For the school year 1919 - 20 in Strathmore, teachers of elementary grades received an increase of one hundred dollars, bringing their annual salary for that year to \$950, while the vice-principal and principal received increases bringing their salaries to \$1450 and \$1600 respectively. Over the next two years salaries were further increased for elementary, vice-principal and principal to \$1200, \$1600, and \$2100 respectively for the year 1921-22. Due to a slight economic recession in 1922, however, the Board found it necessary to reduce these to \$1100, \$1500 and \$1800. All salaries for 1924-25 were again raised by \$100.

In 1925, the Board of Trustees, with a view to stabilizing salaries, instituted a salary schedule which provided for an initial salary of \$1100 for teachers coming on the staff in the elementary grades with annual increments of \$50 until a maximum of \$1300 was reached. Initial salaries for the vice-principal and principal were \$1500 and \$2000 respectively with \$50 annual increments until their salaries reached \$1750 and \$2200

85

School Board Minutes, Strathmore School District, Vol. 111, p. 61.

86

Ibid., Vol. 111, p. 196.

respectively. This schedule remained in effect until 1931, when owing to the effects of the Depression, teachers of the elementary level received a reduction of \$50 on the annual salary while the vice-principal and principal received reductions of \$100 and \$200 per year respectively. The following year a straight reduction of ten percent was made. In Strathmore, in spite of the poor financial condition of the 'thirties, teachers' salaries did not fall below \$1000 per year for teachers new to the staff, while salaries for the vice-principal and principal were maintained at \$1300 and \$1750 respectively.

In 1940, with a return to better financial conditions, a new salary schedule was introduced which provided for a minimum of \$1000 per year with annual increments of \$50 until a maximum of \$1250 was reached for teachers of elementary grades and increases for the vice-principal and principal which would provide a maximum of \$1600 and \$2000 respectively in four years. This schedule remained in effect until 1944, when Strathmore joined the Wheatland School Division. A new salary schedule was then arranged according to which no teacher already on the staff was expected to take a reduction.

In the improvement of teacher qualifications and conditions of employment, much of what was accomplished was a result of efforts of the teachers themselves, working collectively both locally and provincially through the Alberta Teachers' Association.

The A.T.A. was formed during the First World War in Edmonton in the spring of 1918. At this time the teaching vocation was not attractive. Teachers were leaving the vocation in great numbers to enlist or to enter other callings where salaries and living conditions were better.

Many individuals, unqualified as teachers, were being given authority to teach. Tenure was very poor with contracts often on a term basis and broken at will by school trustees and teachers without regard to the rights of either party. There was no appeal against dismissal for qualified teachers who were fast becoming socially and financially depressed.
89

At the first annual meeting held during Easter week, 1918, in Edmonton, in an effort to improve the status of teachers, resolutions were passed relating to a provincial salary schedule, a better form of teacher contract to provide more security for the teacher, citizenship rights for teachers, a code of ethics, a pension scheme for Alberta teachers, publication of an A.T.A. magazine, the formation of a Canadian Teachers' Federation, and among other things, a right to a hearing of the teacher before dismissal.
90

Though it was many years before all the objectives were realized, a better form of contract did emerge at the time. At no time since its organization has the A.T.A. accepted as members those teaching on permit

89

Barnett, John W., "A Brief Historic Record of the Alberta Teachers' Association," A.T.A. Handbook, 1962, pp. 18-21.

90

Ibid.

or letter of authority, though this did not prevent school trustees from hiring them when conditions demanded it. In 1919, the Canadian Teachers' Federation was formed. Its inaugural convention, held in Calgary that year was attended by representatives from all the Western Provinces and Ontario. In the interval between the years 1919 and 1935, the A.T.A. forged ahead, constantly striving toward the achievement of its goals against strong opposition from government and from school trustees. In 1935, however, with the coming to power of the Social Credit Party, things finally swung in favour of the Teachers' Association. ⁹¹

In 1936, the present Board of Reference was established in the School Act. In 1939, the Teachers' Superannuation Act was approved; the first step toward a satisfactory pension scheme for Alberta teachers. In 1944, the Faculty of Education of the University of Alberta was given full responsibility for the training of teachers and began training all the provinces' teachers in 1945. The Certification Committee consisting of representatives of the Department of Education, University and A.T.A. was set up in 1939. This committee did not have statutory authority but in 1944 it received statutory recognition by Order-in-Council providing for the Faculty of Education to assume responsibility for the training of teachers. In the same Order, the Certification Committee became the Board of Teacher Education and Certification consisting of five representatives from the Department of Education, five from the University and three from the Alberta Teachers' Association.

91

Ibid.

Many names are associated with the work of the A.T.A. in improving the economic and social status of teachers, but none is deserving of greater praise than John W. Barnett, who from the time he was made General Secretary-Treasurer in 1919 until his death in 1947, worked tirelessly for the cause of the Association, steadfastly combatting opposition and working closely with A.T.A. locals throughout the province.⁹²

In Strathmore and area, an A.T.A. local was formed in 1924, when the teachers of Strathmore, Carseland and the surrounding rural schools united to form the Bow Valley Local. Elected president of the Local was Mr. S.H. Crowther of Strathmore. Mr. E.W. Dockery of Carseland was elected vice-president. The aims of the Organization in the words of the president were: "to improve in every possible way the educational standards in the district and to cooperate with school boards who have the same aim in view." The Organization met regularly each month, holding meetings alternately at Strathmore and Carseland.⁹³

Extracurricular Activities in the Schools of the Strathmore Area During the Period.

A step toward the fulfillment of the aims of the A.T.A. was taken in December, 1924, when its members planned a number of extracurricular activities to be participated in by all interested schools in the Strathmore and Carseland areas. These activities included an interschool spelling match and an oratorical contest, each to be an

92

Ibid.

93

The Strathmore Standard, October 15, 1924.

annual event. In addition, they planned an interschool track meet for the town and rural schools.

The first spelling contest was held on February 2, 1925 and consisted of four tournaments, each of which involved a division of grades. Division 1 included Grades 11 and 111. Division 2, Grades 1V, V, and VI; Division 3, Grades VII and VIII and Division 4 for Grades IX, X, XI, and XII. Each school was allowed to enter a team
94
of four pupils for each division.

The oratorical contest was planned to include two divisions; one to include elementary pupils and the other for high school pupils. Speeches in this event were to be of from three to five minutes in length. Prizes were awarded for the best speeches. These were in the nature of a cup for first place, a gold medal for second, and a book
95
to each of the other contestants. Both the spelling contest and the oratorical contests were held annually until 1933, when the Music and Drama Festival was organized and held thereafter as an annual affair.

The track meet was also planned with the view to it becoming an annual event. For many years it was held alternately at Strathmore and Carseland with most of the rural schools of both areas participating. The meet included a full range of track events. It was highly competitive with the pupils being divided according to age for each event. The school winning the greatest number of points was awarded a shield while

94

The Strathmore Standard, December 15, 1924.

95

Ibid.

all individual winners were awarded ribbons. The track meet proved very popular with all pupils and did much to help build good school spirit as well as contribute to physical development, since several weeks of practice went into the preparation of the pupils for the various events.

Chief among the extracurricular activities of the Strathmore School and the surrounding rural districts was the annual School Fair held in Strathmore each fall. This event was first organized in the Strathmore area in 1919 as a result of the efforts of the Agricultural Schools at Olds and Claresholm to organize school fairs in various centres throughout the Province. In April, a committee was formed in Strathmore for the purpose of organizing all schools in the area.⁹⁶ The committee called a meeting to be held in the town hall to which the school trustees were invited as well as all interested parents and teachers. Mr. Holeton of the Olds School of Agriculture spoke at the meeting. In his talk he stressed that the purpose of the school fair was to encourage the study of agriculture among the school children of the district and to help in the attempt to bring the educational system into close touch with rural life. He explained that the Department of Agriculture would supply the seeds, give demonstrations and supply twenty-five dollars in prizes for livestock and that the Department would also send a lady demonstrator during the summer months to assist in planning the Domestic Science competition. Mr. Holeton also addressed the pupils in their classrooms and acquainted them with the purpose and nature

of the fair. Judges were to be appointed by the Department of Agriculture.

Letters were later sent out to sixteen schools with application forms for seeds. Students were to compete in a wide variety of activities which included displays of garden produce, grains and grasses, sewing, knitting, cooking, canning, livestock, weed displays, wood handicraft, and essays on various phases of farm life.

The first school fair was held on September 22, 1919, under the direction of the Olds School of Agriculture and under the auspices of the Department of Agriculture. Displays were arranged in the basement of the Methodist Church and on an adjacent lot, where a large and interested gathering of parents viewed the entries and shared the enthusiasm of the competitors. Entries, which included a twenty-three pound pumpkin, were reported of excellent quality. The initial success of the fair, in a community which had always endeavoured to develop an attitude of appreciation for the value of agriculture in the minds of its school children, augured well for its continued success in the future. The school fair in the Strathmore area was in fact a successful annual event from its inception. A dozen or more school districts participated in it. On many occasions it was highly commended by agricultural officials as one of the finest in the Province. In 1937, following the revision of the curriculum, the fair in Strathmore was extended to include also Enterprise exhibits. These were in the nature of written reports, wall murals and animated displays depicting phases of history and geography. Introduced also in 1937, was an oratorical contest for pupils of Grades VII and VIII in which they competed for cups.⁹⁷

Financing of the school fair has been done through the payment of fees by participating school districts, through aid from the Department of Agriculture, and through contributions from local businessmen and farmers who provided some of the prizes for the events.⁹⁸ The amount of the fee from the districts ranged from ten to fifteen dollars per classroom each year. Aid from the Department of Agriculture was stopped in 1941 but with the school fair programme being supported by the large Division, it has continued to be a successful activity.

Another extracurricular activity which has created much public interest and which has been participated in with a great deal of enthusiasm by the pupils of the Strathmore school and those of the rural schools of the area has been the Music and Drama Festival. This was initiated in Strathmore in 1933 by Inspector Edwards, school inspector for the Bassano Inspectorate.

The festival included competitive participation in elocution, instrumental and vocal solos, and dramatics. It was planned as a one day affair with twenty-seven schools of the Bassano Inspectorate taking part. Competitions were held in the Memorial Hall, the United Church, the local theatre and in the dining room of the Strathmore Hotel.

The first festival proved to be a great success with about one thousand parents and others in attendance. Competitions were classed according to grade and further classed as town and rural. Judges for the events were invited from Calgary and Edmonton and included the Honourable Perrin Baker, Minister of Education, Mr. P.L. Newcombe of Calgary, Mr. Fred McNally,

98

Ibid., April 1, 1925.

Supervisor of Schools for Alberta, Miss Olive Fisher and Miss Theresa Siegal, both of Calgary. The school winning the greatest number of points won a grand challenge shield awarded and presented by the Mr. J.O. Buckley, then M.L.A. for the Bow River constituency.⁹⁹

Although the Music and Drama Festival began as an activity of the Bassano Inspectorate it was continued in Strathmore for the Strathmore schools and those of the surrounding rural districts after the boundaries of the Bassano Inspectorate were changed. It has been held annually and successfully ever since, though some changes have been made in the nature of the events with orchestral and other instrumental groups being added.

Other activities initiated during the 'thirties and maintained annually with varying degrees of success, included a Dramatics Club organized in 1932, a French Club in 1933, the publication of a high school "Annual" and the formation of a high school orchestra in 1934,¹⁰⁰ the staging of a Christmas concert which had its beginning in 1928 and the organization of a students' council in 1939. These were in addition to the previously held interschool team sports of hockey, baseball and the high school cadet corps, all of which were revitalized at the beginning of the decade of the 'thirties.

Both the Dramatics Club and the French Club were organized and maintained through the efforts of Mr. Crowther. During the late 'twenties and the early 'thirties, interest in dramatics had increased tremendously,

99

Ibid., May 10, 1933.

100

The Strathmore Standard, October 10, 1934

resulting in many places in the formation of Little Theatre groups. In Strathmore, though the club was not formed until 1934, Mr. Crowther had for several years previous directed and staged many fine plays. These were staged in Strathmore and sometimes, too, in neighbouring towns. In addition to providing the pupils with excellent training in a social sense, the productions meant sizeable financial returns for the school. The French Club was organized in 1933. Its purpose was to encourage fourth year and former French students to speak the French language. Meetings were held once a week in which current news was discussed and in which short plays were produced in French. The club presented plays before the public. A small admission charge was usually made and the proceeds used for school purposes. Both clubs were maintained annually as long as Mr. Crowther was principal of the school.

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The presentation by the high school and elementary school pupils of a Christmas concert was begun in 1928. Although it was planned principally along dramatic lines with plays directed by the principal and some of the staff members, other activities participated in by the pupils were displayed. Among these were vocal and instrumental solos and duets, choruses, orchestral numbers and demonstrations by the Gymnasium Club which included pyramid building, tumbling and other athletic numbers.

The Gymnasium Club, organized through the initiative of the chairman of the School Board in 1934, was under the direction of Mr. Cameron of the school staff and held meetings in the spare room of the elementary school

building. Mr. Cameron was assisted by other citizens interested in the physical development of the boys and girls of high school age. The club was active until the spare room was brought into use.¹⁰²

The high school orchestra was formed in 1934. In its initial stages it was under the guidance of the leader of the town orchestra but in later years came under the direction of one or more of the more capable pupils. It played at most of the school functions and for all school dances. It consisted originally of piano, violin, saxophone, trumpet, and drums.¹⁰³

The year 1934 also marked the publication of the first high school "Annual". The publication was financed from money raised through advertising, a grant of fifty dollars from the President of the C.P.R., and from funds raised through student sponsored activities as well as from the one dollar per copy charged from its sale. The first copy proved very popular and it was hoped that publication could be made every year.¹⁰⁴ Such was not the case, however, for in the following seventeen years, only four "Annuals" were issued.

A forward step in the development of pupil initiative and enterprise was made in 1939. In the fall of that year the student body of the high school formed a students' council to better organize student activities. The Council named the Strathmore School Students' Council consisted of president, vice-president, secretary-treasurer, and six executive members including the principal and vice-principal. The Council met monthly and were responsible for the initiating of many activities, some of which

102

High School Annual, Strathmore High School, 1934-35, p. 25.

103

Ibid., p. 31.

104

The Strathmore Standard, October 10, 1934.

included the organization of house leagues in table tennis and badminton which were played at noon hours and after school. Chess and checkers were also made available for noon hour recreation. These games were much appreciated by the out-of-town pupils who were now being taken to Strathmore by bus from schools closed in the Wheatland School Division, and who were required to eat their lunch at school. Other activities of the Council included student dances, skating parties, and social evenings.¹⁰⁵ A further contribution was made in 1939, when the organization of high school curling took place.¹⁰⁶ This sport began with only three teams involved in house league play. It soon grew to a local league of eight teams or rinks and involved tournament play with other towns. Both boys and girls have been active in curling. The girls in later years formed their own leagues.

The Strathmore Cadet Corps was first formed in 1922 by Mr. R. L. Whitney, then principal of the school, with an enrollment of thirty-six. The Corps was disbanded in 1924, to be reorganized by Mr. I. Mackenzie in 1928, since which time it appears to have been maintained successfully, receiving the full support of the school boards. When the Corps was organized the School Board provided them with rifles to the value of three hundred and sixty dollars and the following year provided them with uniforms. The rifles were supplied by Military District 13, for which the Board signed a bond for their safekeeping. Uniforms were supplied at the same time but the Board donated ten dollars toward the purchase of caps for the uniforms. In 1930, the Board provided the Corps with funds to

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School Daze, Strathmore High School Annual, 1939-40, pp.30-31.

¹⁰⁶

Ibid., p. 34.

equip a rifle range in the basement of a local hardware store. The range was later moved to the basement of a local hotel when the hardware store was converted into a freezer and locker plant.

Cadet duties included a variety of activities. They took part in ceremonies pertaining to special days as Remembrance Day, July 1, annual inspection and rifle range practice. They were required to attend summer camp where they underwent special training conducted by the Canadian Army Active Force and they received military training as the Strathmore Royal Canadian Army Cadets in affiliation with the 68th Light Antiaircraft Reserve Force and sponsored by the Strathmore Branch of the Canadian Legion.

When in 1943 Mr. Mackenzie enlisted, supervision of the Strathmore Cadets was taken over by Mr. J. Crellin, who in the following year attended a course in Camrose, Alberta, for Cadet training. He became a lieutenant.

The object of Cadet training is to give mental, moral and physical training to boys and so to form their characters as to enable them to start well in life; to develop in them the qualities of patriotism and good citizenship and to fit them in the event of national emergency to take their places in the defence of their country. Mr. Mackenzie defended Cadet work on the grounds that it was valuable from a disciplinary point of view and that it aided in the formation of good character in youth.¹⁰⁷

Whether the growth of initiative and self expression on the part of the pupils in the late 'thirties as exemplified in their formation of a students' council and its independent action was a natural development

in youth because of a more enlightened times or whether it was because of, in part at least, to the introduction of the new program by the Department in the school year 1936-1937 and its progressive educational theories or to a combination of both may be a matter for conjecture. However, the new principles of educational theory found in the new Programme of Studies which marked a distinct change from traditional concepts were introduced to develop a more enterprising youth.¹⁰⁸

In the high school programme the principles included:

1. Diversification, and adaptation to individual capacities, aptitudes, interests and needs. The program provided a core of compulsory subjects with several elective subjects from which the student could choose to suit his needs and interests.
2. Educational guidance for every subject.
3. Providing in the school and in the classroom the conditions and environment most favourable to mental, social, and personal growth.
4. Meaningful educative experience which involved some departure from memorization and reproduction of verbalized material and a greater amount of pupil participation in finding and doing for himself.
5. Functional instruction in English as the basic tool of comprehension and expression, not as one subject among others.

In the elementary grades, the aims of the new programme were to develop social competence in the child, rather than encyclopedic learning. The activity programme or Enterprise technique of teaching caught the imagination of most elementary teachers. In the Enterprise pattern a

major emphasis was placed on Social Studies with Health and Science merged with it to provide basic content for the activity.

In November, 1936, to acquaint the public with the type of work carried on in the new Enterprise method, Mr. Cameron invited the parents and friends to a Grade VI demonstration and display of work done during the course of an Enterprise on Medieval Times. In the display the parents viewed a skillfully constructed castle complete with moat, drawbridge, knights and ladies in costume, and with the fields and implements in keeping with the times. In addition, a play was presented in full costume by the pupils. It was followed by the presentation of individual pupil reports on various phases of the subject. The parents expressed themselves as being of the opinion that the customs and conditions of the time were made very real to the pupils, but expressed concern that the new procedures might detract from the pupils receiving a thorough grounding in the basic subjects and further expressed the hope that a fair balance would be maintained by the teachers to prevent too great an incursion into the day's work by the activities of the new programme.¹⁰⁹

In his annual report for 1937, Mr. Crowther explained the changes made in the new programme of studies and the purpose of the changes with respect to the broadened nature of educational procedures. He pointed out that from the new course certain general trends of the times would be found in an up-to-date school programme. Of these trends he mentioned the broader perspective in education, with recognition not only of knowledge

but also of skills, habits, appreciation, attitudes and ideals as valued objectives. It meant a reaction against the mechanized routine of formal instruction in favour of the adoption of the project or Enterprise procedures and involved the substitution of pupil activity for teacher activity. He pointed out that there was recognition in the programme of training for personal and social efficiency, emotional control and integration of personality, with the general acceptance of the principle that the purpose of education is fundamentally social and that an understanding of the social environment is quite as necessary as an understanding of the physical environment. He stated that there was a hope that through education it would be possible to help maintain the belief in the ideals of democracy.¹¹⁰

Later, in a further statement made during Education Week, Mr. Crowther told a gathering that where in former years the idea had been to memorize many facts with perhaps little idea as to their meaning, the object now was to train students to think the subject through to its logical conclusion and thus make themselves better fitted to meet life when they leave school.¹¹¹

In 1939, the staff of the high school requested of the students that they express their opinion about the new system of education, including the Enterprise method, curriculum changes and promotions. These opinions were then published in the Strathmore Standard. Some of the pupils expressed themselves as follows:¹¹²

¹¹⁰

Ibid., February 3, 1938.

¹¹¹

Ibid., February 10, 1938.

¹¹²

Ibid.

"Under the new courses there are fewer examinations, a fact that tends to do away with last minute cramming, a practice quite common under the old system."

"Students are taught to think for themselves rather than obtain all information from books."

"Working together in enterprises and other group work, the students are taught the values of organization and group work and cooperation."

"There is less homework, giving the student more time to devote to social activities which are a great aid in helping a person to get along in the social world in order to succeed in life."

"There is a large choice of courses, giving a much more interesting and useful study as bookkeeping, typewriting, and dramatics."

"It requires greater initiative on the part of the student to obtain knowledge on a subject."

"The student has a chance to give his own opinion on a subject whereas he used to be told what was thought to be right."

"It has introduced new and useful subjects of which the knowledge is needed in everyday life as carpentry, cooking, health, psychology and typewriting."

"The student's reading vocabulary has been increased through the extra reading required."

"It has done away with many final examinations and the consequent cramming for examinations."

"It has aroused the student's sense of responsibility."

"It has done away with the thought that the student is competing with others. Rather the new system aims at the student constantly and steadily improving his own work. Grading is done on more than just knowledge crammed into the head of the student in that the year's work, notebooks and other contributions of the student are considered. It has also meant that better records of the student's work are kept both with respect to the student's ability and with respect to character, personality, habits and hobbies."

Many students noted certain disadvantages arising out of the changes. Some of these included:

"Continually working in groups tends to do away with individual thinking."

"In group activity the heaviest burden is bound to fall upon the more energetic and ambitious ones, while the lazier pupils get an equal amount of credit for the work without receiving the full benefit of the activity."

Though many schools, especially the smaller high schools, found difficulty in fulfilling completely all aspects of the new course because of large classes per teacher, inadequate facilities and in many cases a refusal to break with tradition, the Strathmore Schools appear to have been able to institute most of the desired changes. This was due largely to the sympathetic attitude maintained by the Boards toward the change and to their cooperation in supplying teachers with necessary supplies and equipment. Inspector Sullivan, in his report for the 1940-41 school year, stated that the Strathmore teachers had kept in close contact with the changing procedures in the schools and were sympathetic with the aims and objectives of the modern curriculum. He mentioned that the school was well provided with a good reference library and well equipped with science and physics equipment. Typing, General Shop and Home Economics

were also being taught, he said, but further commented on the fact that though the present arrangements for Shop and Home Economics were satisfactory as a temporary arrangement, the Board should consider building more adequate accommodation on the school grounds.

113

With the introduction of the new course of studies and the new concepts of educational theory, the organization of large school divisions and their impact upon family life and the increased activity on the part of the students with respect to extracurricular activities, it is not surprising that parents should show greater interest and concern over their children's education and their school life generally. The feeling that parents should also take an active part in educational matters was expressed by a few more concerned parents of Strathmore when in 1942 they advanced plans toward the formation of a Home and School Association in the town.

The initial step toward the formation of such an association was taken in September, 1942, when a group of parents arranged a meeting to which all the parents were invited. To acquaint the gathering with the aims of the Home and School movement and to advise them with respect to organization, Mr. Panabaker of the Calgary School System was asked to speak at the meeting. He spoke in favour of the movement and stressed its value in bringing about closer understanding among parents, teachers, and pupils and stressed that the primary purpose of a Home and School organization is to assist in the further development of boys and girls. He pointed out that it should be a means by which all factors that make for child

development are studied and that it should bring about increased cooperation between parents and teachers.

114

Following the organization of the Association, the members sent out an appeal through the local paper for public support and for new members. The appeal stated that if a child is to be successful in life he must have splendid health, sanity of vision, capacity for work and a wholesome attitude toward life. This, the appeal went on to say, is true education; a joint partnership of the home, school, and community; a training not of the mind alone but of every activity of the child and an ideal which if it is to be realized involves cooperation of the home, school, and community. The appeal maintained that for such a purpose, no organization is better adapted than the Home and School Association. It stated that its activities would be directed in a long range view toward:

1. Cooperation of teachers, and parents for the benefit of the child.
2. A study of the progress of education.
3. A widened interest in child welfare.
4. An improved environment.

115

In the years following its organization, the Strathmore Home and School Association proved to be an active and effective body in helping to bring about needed change and improvement in school affairs. This was particularly so in the period immediately following the incorporation of the Strathmore S.D. into the Wheatland School Division, when a strong voice was needed to bring about an improvement in the school plant.

 114

The Strathmore Standard, October 1, 1942.

115

The Strathmore Standard, November 26, 1942.

CHAPTER V

THE WHEATLAND SCHOOL DIVISION

When the Social Credit Government took office in 1935, the Province was in the grip of an economic depression, causing serious set-backs in the education of rural youth. Some of the undesirable aspects included the inequality of opportunity for rural young people to secure a high school education because of poverty and the lack of local high school facilities. Further, there was inefficiency of operation since there were many rural one-room schools operating with only a few pupils. Also, the quality of education tended to be poor, because one teacher was responsible for the teaching of several high school grades in addition to the elementary grades. To this was added the fact that many of the teachers were not qualified to teach high school subjects.

That something should be done about the unsatisfactory educational conditions in rural areas was obvious to some before the mid-thirties but nothing was done about it. However, within a year after its election to office, the Social Credit Government under William Aberhart as Premier and Minister of Education, enacted legislation pertaining to the creation of the large school division as a means of school administration, which it was hoped would help solve some of the problems and improve the quality of rural education in the Province. The enactment, incorporating a whole new section of the Alberta School Act, enabled the Minister of Education to organize large units of administration "where conditions prevailing are such that it appears advisable in the interests of education to do so, or if it is so requested by the Boards of Trustees of the majority of

school districts in a proposed division, the Minister may by order, constitute a school division consisting of any number of rural public school districts wholly or partially included in a consolidated district."¹

Plans for the organizing of the large divisions included the holding of public meetings at suitable centres in each proposed division to explain to the people the new plan and to give them an opportunity to voice their opinions. These meetings were addressed by members of the legislature, school inspectors and other departmental officials. When plans were finalized, orders establishing the divisions were gazetted and all the requirements regarding nominations and elections of trustees carried out. The first order established eleven large divisions all of which became effective on January 1, 1937. These amalgamated 762 of the 3771 districts in the Province, a major step in the reorganization of school administration of Alberta.² Though the Act in its original form provided for rural districts only, a revision of the School Act in 1938 made provision for the inclusion of villages, towns and consolidated districts, with the result that within a few years a large number of villages and towns were incorporated in divisions by mutual consent.

The Ministerial Order which created the Wheatland School Division #41 was passed in the Legislature in October, 1938. The order provided for the consolidation of seventy-seven rural school districts for administration purposes. These were divided into five Subdivisions each of which consisted of from fourteen to seventeen schools. The portion of the

1

Government of Alberta, The School Act, Sect. 231, 1940, p. 86.

2

Dr. J. C. Jonason, "Large Units of Administration in Alberta Schools". A.T.A. Magazine, Vol. 35, June 1955, pp. 14-15.

Province covered by this Division extended from Carseland on the south to Three Hills on the north, a distance of about sixty miles. In width it extended from Delacour on the west to Hussar on the east, a distance of about fifty miles. Subdivision One in the south central part of the Division included most of the schools of the Strathmore area. The Division included lands lying within four municipalities, from which educational costs would be collected.

The Order creating this Division also stipulated that Mr. F. R. McVeigh of Calgary should act as temporary secretary of the Division and further stipulated when and where the first meeting of delegates of each subdivision should meet. Delegates at these Subdivisional meetings consisted of delegates or representatives from each of the rural schools included in the Subdivision. The meeting for Subdivision 1 was to be held in the Strathmore High School on November 14, 1938, at three o'clock in the afternoon. At this initial meeting of the rural delegates, Divisional Trustees were to be nominated, with one trustee to be elected to the Divisional Board from each Subdivision. The date set for the organizational meeting of the Divisional Board was December 21, 1938.

A further stipulation of the Order was that on the third day of January, 1939, the assets of every School District in the Division were to be vested in the Board of the Division and that the liabilities of each District included would be payable by the Division. All local Boards of Trustees were to cease to have functional powers except those of a minor importance as enumerated in the School Act.³

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Alberta Gazette, October 31, 1938, p. 1087.

Though the name given to the Division was initially the Strathmore School Division #40, this was changed by an Order in Council to be the Wheatland School Division #40,⁴ in accordance with the wishes of the Divisional Board at its first meeting.

At the first meeting of the delegates from the School Districts of Subdivision I, held in Strathmore, Inspector J. A. McGregor was in attendance to explain the new scheme for school administration, to advise as to procedure and to answer questions raised by delegates. The meeting was marked by many present strongly condemning the new system as very unsatisfactory. Much concern was expressed over the loss of control by the District Boards who were to be relieved of all responsibility and financial control. In this respect the meeting was typical of most organizational meetings held in other Subdivisions. Inspector McGregor, in answer to the objections, stated that according to a study of eleven areas where the system was in operation, there had been an average saving of about five thousand dollars per year to each District or a fifteen to twenty percent saving. He stated that the system was in operation in England, Scotland, New Zealand, British Columbia, Ontario, and several states of the United States. He said that he doubted if after a year's trial, anyone would desire to revert to the old system. He concurred with some of the delegates in their expression of concern over the lack of provision for extracurricular activities as school fairs, field days, and festivals and said that something would certainly be done to have such activities within the Division.⁵

⁴

Alberta Gazette, January 31, 1939.

⁵The Strathmore Standard, November 17, 1938.

The newly elected board decided to establish their central office for the Division in Strathmore where, on January 6, 1939, they held their first regular meeting. Inspector Wilson, who had been appointed Superintendent of the Division, was in attendance. He requested that all high school students remain in their schools for the remainder of the school year, stating that in September the Divisional Board would take care of all high school pupils within the Division. He informed the Board that they would take care of all supplies immediately. With respect to the teachers he said that all would be expected to continue on their existing contracts until the end of June after which new contracts would be drawn up.⁶

In September, Mr. Wilson was replaced by Mr. M. McLeod as Superintendent of the Division. Following the appointment of teachers for the Division, Mr. McLeod called a meeting of the Divisional teaching staff in which the teachers were informed about operation of schools under the new system. Matters of policy adopted by the Board included:

1. Transfer cards would be required by pupils moving from school to school within the Division.
2. Beginners not quite six could enter school in September at the teachers' discretion provided there was sufficient room but that any beginner must be six by December 31.
3. No school should close except on word from the Divisional office.
4. Teachers absent owing to illness would be relieved by a substitute during the time the regular teacher was away.

5. In the event of an epidemic schools would be closed only on the word of a Medical Health Officer.

6. A first aid kit would be placed in every school.

7. No pupil should be kept in at recess for punishment and if detained after school such detention should not be over twenty minutes.

8. No compulsory homework was to be given up to and including Grade VI and only a limited amount in Junior High School.

9. Adequate playground supervision must be provided.

10. The sum of ten dollars was to be provided each year per classroom for books. These were to be ordered by three schools in consultation and then circulated among the three schools concerned during the year.

11. Report cards would be issued, the format of which would be arranged by the Superintendent.

12. A dormitory was to be established at the town of Kathryn for the convenience of children from rural districts not served by bus transportation, so that they could continue their high school there, where extra high school facilities would be provided.⁷

Speaking through the press for public information in December, 1940, Mr. McLeod gave some idea of the accomplishments of the Divisional System since the formation of the Division in 1938. He informed the people that his Division included eighty-one organized school districts with seventy public school teachers and three high school, teaching a total enrollment of 1345 pupils in Grades 1 to XII, while a few pupils from within the bounds of the Division were being taught in schools without the Division. He

pointed out the very important and urgent job undertaken by the Divisional Board in the rehabilitation of school buildings, teacherages, and grounds, most of which had suffered severely during the depression period. Such renovation work included the repairing of buildings, outside painting, interior decoration, landscaping, as well as renovating school equipment such as desks, blackboards, and heating equipment. He said that in many cases the buildings were too poor to be repaired, necessitating the construction of new classrooms and schoolhouses.

In the matter of high school instruction, Mr. McLeod said that the problem had been attacked in a thorough manner. All high school pupils had been removed from the rural one-room schools and most of the pupils provided for in local high schools where their tuition was paid by the Divisional authorities. Bus transportation was provided in most cases but where such was not available or convenient the students could attend at Kathyrn. Here pupils could complete their high school in four years. Dormitory facilities were provided at very reasonable rates for as many as thirty pupils. Grade IX was being taught in the rural schools upon recommendation of the Superintendent. High School grades were also taught at Swalwell, the only village which, to that time had joined the Division. There a new two-room school had been built with all facilities for the teaching of options as Typing, General Shop and Home Economics. In addition, high school was taught in two other centres where Grades IX to XI were provided. Though high school pupils were taken by bus to these centres, some were transported to school at the parents' expense. This was the case where it was not convenient to operate buses. The parents were remunerated by the Board on a rated allowance. In other cases where

it wasn't possible for a child to be taken to a high school within or without the Division, correspondence courses were provided. These were paid for by the Divisional Board provided that an A or a B standing was achieved by the pupil. In explaining the value of extended high school facilities, Mr. McLeod noted that there were at the time seventy-seven pupils attending high school within the bounds of the Division, whereas before there had been only one, and that no pupil within the Division need be deterred from securing a good high school education provided he was willing to try.

With respect to libraries, the Superintendent said that most libraries had not been kept up-to-date, and though little was done in 1939, a generous contribution of twenty-five dollars per classroom was made by the Board in 1940. Books were selected by the teacher in consultation with the Superintendent in a manner which made it possible by careful selection to provide for an exchange among groups of schools during the year for greater utilization of books purchased.

Another matter expedited with efficiency and saving, he said, was the purchase and distribution of classroom supplies, pencils, erasers, scribblers and so forth. All supplies were purchased during the summer and stored in the Divisional store rooms. These were distributed to the schools during the last week of August on a per pupil allotment. Textbooks were not supplied or distributed at that time.

In reference to the teaching staff, he said that reorganization had been accomplished without friction and that wherever possible teachers transfers were made in accordance with the wishes of the teacher and sometimes, too, in accordance with the wishes of a Local District Board. Some schools were closed, he said, but this was done only after full consultation with the Districts concerned and that the schools which were closed had a very small attendance.

In conclusion, Mr. McLeod said that there were no longer rich and poor school districts because the new system offered equal educational opportunities and advantages to all who desired to use them.⁸

During the war years, the trustees of the Division encountered many problems related to wartime conditions which hampered administration and development. Though economically the period was one of rising prosperity from the production of good crops under favourable weather conditions, progress was restricted by wartime restrictions on the supply of many types of materials as well as by a shortage of labour and transportation facilities.

In the matter of maintaining classroom facilities, the Trustees, during the War were able to meet demands quite successfully. High school demands were met by means of bus transportation while the situation in the Elementary grades remained much the same as they had been previous to the formation of the large Division except for extensive renovation of schools and teacherages which had deteriorated in condition during the Depression years. Some new construction was possible during the first couple of years of the War. In 1940, a new two-room school was built at Swalwell, where the old one was too poor to be rebuilt. It was of modern design, provided with a special Science room, General Shop facilities, and Home Economics facilities. After 1942, however, very little new construction was possible, for a decade. Renovation work included placing old schoolhouses on cement foundations, relining the walls with donnaconna board, renewing floors and painting.

A significant administrative feature of the War years was the closing

of several one-room rural schools and the transporting by bus of their pupils to neighbouring districts or to small "centralizations".⁹ Such closing of schools was made necessary by small attendance and also by the increasing shortage of teachers. In 1942, there were five rural schools closed with an equal number in each succeeding year until the end of the War. The formation of a small "centralization" involved the moving of one or two of the vacated schools to one central point. In the Strathmore area, one such "centralization" was at Nightingale, where a schoolhouse was moved in to provide a two-room unit. Pupils from several Districts around attended there. Instruction was given in Grades I to X. One classroom was devoted to Grades I to VI, with twenty-six pupils in attendance initially. The other was used for Grades VII to X inclusive, with about sixteen pupils in attendance initially. These numbers remained fairly constant until 1948, when with the closing of another District, the added attendance necessitated an arrangement of Grades I to V and VI to X inclusive. This arrangement was maintained until 1951¹⁰ when it was again operated as a one-room unit for one year. Thereafter it was closed entirely and all pupils taken to Strathmore.

Another significant feature of the War years was the inclusion of villages and towns in the Division. The Carseland Consolidated School joined the Division in 1943. Strathmore and Acme were included in 1944, while Beiseker, Rockyford and Rosebud entered in 1945. With these schools under Divisional administration it was possible to centralize to a much

9

Superintendent's Annual Reports, Wheatland School Division, 1940-1948.

10

Ibid., 1951.

greater extent. Extra accommodation was provided in these centres by adding additional rooms to existing buildings or by the simple expedient of moving in a vacated school from the country.¹¹

The first four or five post-war years continued to be very difficult ones for school administrators. With the close of the War, it had been hoped that there would be an easing of the teacher shortage and a more plentiful supply of construction materials. This was not the case, however, for in reality conditions in both respects were worse, necessitating further closing of schools in rural districts so that by 1951 there were in the Division, fourteen graded schools of from two to ten classrooms each and sixteen one-room schools with distribution as follows:

No. of Classrooms	10	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
No. of Schools	1	2	1	2	1	2	5	16

Of these, two maintained three-room high schools, three maintained two-room high schools and three maintained one-room high schools. There were also two travelling shop teachers and two travelling home economics teachers to make possible a wider range of options in the high schools.¹²

With increased centralization in the larger centres the matter of supplying classroom accommodations for the large increase in pupils became a major issue. In 1946, the Board had planned to construct a two-room school at Kathryn and a large school at Strathmore for which plans were drawn and tenders called for. However, when the bids for a two-room school ran as high as thirty thousand dollars and when building materials became difficult

11

Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1943-45

12

Superintendent's Annual Report, Wheatland School Division, 1951.

to obtain because of competitive demands for them, it was decided to postpone the building programme until times were more opportune. In cases where overcrowding of classrooms prevailed, the Board continued the policy of moving in rural schoolhouses from districts which had been closed. The better buildings were renovated while the older ones, which had deteriorated through time and vandalism, were sold. This policy saved the taxpayers many thousands of dollars and relieved the overcrowding. The same policy was applied to teacherages, which were in great demand. The teacherages were modernized to the greatest extent possible, since a comfortable teacherage added much to the attractiveness of a position at this time.

The centralization of schools necessitating as it did the accumulation of several one-room buildings on the school grounds of the larger centres, created school plants out of keeping with the needs of modern times. Needless to say, there was a considerable amount of complaining on the part of the parents with respect to the inadequacy of such accommodation. Considerable pressure was brought to bear upon the Divisional Trustees for the provision of modern schools in these centres.¹³ Though the conditions were beyond remedy during the 1940's, there was sufficient improvement in the availability of materials at the beginning of the 'fifties to make it possible for the Trustees and the Superintendent to implement measures which brought vast improvements in spite of rising costs, though these were reflected in increased taxation.

In 1950, the Board submitted a By-Law providing for the issuance of debentures for the sum of four hundred thousand dollars for the construction

13

The Strathmore Standard, June 2, 1949: February 16, 1950.

of new schools in four of the "centralizations".¹⁴ The By-Law was passed and by 1951, new schools had been built at Rosebud and Kathryn and steps initiated for the construction of similar but larger plants at Beiseker and Strathmore. In the following year a modern six-room school was completed at Beiseker and a ten-room plant completed at Strathmore.¹⁵

In 1952, with extra rooms available at Strathmore and Kathryn, the Nightingale School was closed and the children taken to Strathmore. At the same time, to further centralization, Grades XI and XII were removed from Swalwell and sent to Acme, while the pupils of Grade IX and XII were removed from Irricana and sent to Kathryn. These changes resulted in three-room high schools at Strathmore and Acme and two-room high schools in four centres. One of these was at Kathryn, where by this time, too, the dormitory had been discontinued as bus service was extended to practically all families in the Division.

By 1957, all of the one-room rural schools in the Division had been closed with the exception of the four Hutterite schools. Centralization in the Division was complete. There were by that time five "centralizations" teaching through Grade XII, three of which maintained four-room high schools, and two of which maintained two-room high schools. In addition to this, one other school centre included Grade X and three included Grade IX. The Hutterite schools taught only to Grade VIII.¹⁶

To accommodate the extra enrollment at Strathmore, it was necessary to add a new wing to the ten-room structure. The wing contained four

14

Ibid., May 18, 1950

15

Ibid., January 18, 1950.

16

Superintendent's Annual Report, 1957.

classrooms, a Science room, a Typing and Library room combined, and a Gymnasium. It was ready for the 1957-58 school year.¹⁷ Other centralized schools underwent enlargement, also.

In addition to classroom construction, there was also in the following year an extensive programme in teacherage construction. In addition to a modern duplex teacherage being built at Strathmore there were modern teacherages built at Rockyford, Cluny, and Hussar. The last two "centralizations" were included in the Wheatland School Division when it was re-organized with the introduction of coterminous boundaries in 1954.

The year 1958 was marked in Strathmore by a further addition to the school when, because of further increase in pupil attendance from the closing of the Namaka School, these children were taken to Strathmore. This involved the construction of an additional eight classrooms and an audio visual room to make a total accommodation of twenty classrooms for approximately five hundred ten pupils. At the same time the school grounds were improved and seeded to grass. A third suite was built in the basement of the duplex teacherage to help house a few more of the many teachers employed there.¹⁸

Other administrative developments involved the rearranging of School Divisions and Municipal Districts so that the boundaries of the Divisions and Municipalities formed were coterminous. Later, in 1960, the county system of administration was introduced.

The setting up of coterminous boundaries for School Divisions and Municipalities, designed to improve relations between Divisional officials and those of the Municipality formed, was executed in 1954, at which time

17

Divisional Board Report to Electors, 1956.

18

Report of Divisional Board to Electors, 1958.

all Divisions and Municipalities of the Province except in the Peace River and Grande Prairie section were reorganized.¹⁹ The change received the full support of the Divisional and Municipal authorities. In the Wheatland Division it meant the incorporation of several municipalities into one large municipality and the change of boundaries of the Wheatland School Division to coincide with those of the new municipality formed.

It was named the Wheatland Municipal District No. 40. The change in boundaries meant for the Wheatland School Division the inclusion of new "centralizations" as Cluny and Gleichen to the southwest while at the same time the Division lost some of its assessment which included Beiseker, Irricana, Kathryn and Acme to the north.

As the policy of centralization progressed there was an increasing need for transportation facilities. This meant that an increasing number of buses had to be put on the road. It meant, too, that the roads over which they were to pass had to be improved and kept open for winter travel. A dirt road no longer sufficed.

Though large comfortable school buses transport children today, the early buses were nothing more than ordinary automobiles privately owned for the most part. These vehicles carried up to twelve or more pupils and were required to operate over dirt roads, often made muddy by rains or spring thaws. As more buses were operated, however, the Municipalities gave full support to the cause and in a few years all roads over which buses were required to travel were graded and surface gravelled. The type of bus put into service also was improved. The new buses were factory made for

19

Alberta Department of Education, Annual Report, 1955, p. 8.

the purpose and built to government specifications with respect to safety and comfort. Such vehicles were purchased by the Divisional School Administrators and put into use, along with many privately owned buses. In 1946, the Wheatland School Division transported children from thirty-three school districts to central points. For the task the School Division operated nine buses, while thirteen were privately owned and under contract with the Trustees. In addition the Board made thirty-seven agreements with isolated families to transport their own children at a rated allowance.²⁰

In 1951, bus transportation facilities had increased to thirty-five public buses carrying 757 school children to school and fifteen private buses carrying 211 children, while separate agreements were made with families for 19 children. Bus conveyance had become a major item of administration and one which accounted for the second largest single expenditure of the Division, though government grants helped considerably in meeting it. Government grants at this time varied from \$335 per year for less than fifteen miles in a round trip to \$675 per year for seventy-five miles and over, provided that the daily average load was not less than eight pupils. In 1951, eight new buses were purchased at a total cost of \$37,744.61. Older buses no longer met the requirements of the Highways Traffic Board and had to be replaced.²¹ The new buses were larger, carrying up to forty-eight or more pupils. In 1958, there were forty-eight buses in service of which twelve were publicly owned and thirty-six privately owned. They carried about twelve hundred pupils to schools in which there was a total Divisional attendance of seventeen hundred and fifty-six pupils. The

20

Superintendent's Annual Report, Wheatland School Division, 1946.

21

Ibid., 1951

longest daily route in 1958 was one hundred ten miles while the shortest was thirty-seven miles. The total mileage for the year was 3419 miles. Sixteen pupils received payment in lieu of transportation being supplied.²²

Bus drivers in 1955 were paid a basic salary of seventy-five dollars per month with an additional five dollars for a pupil load of twenty-five or more, while an additional five dollars was paid for a total mileage of sixty and a further five dollars for each additional ten miles on the route. Private buses were paid for on a mileage basis which varied from fifteen cents per mile for a private automobile or station wagon to twenty-nine cents for a large class A bus of thirty-six passenger capacity.²³

With the extension of bus transportation of pupils, there was increased concern on the part of parents with respect to the effect of the longer day upon the children, especially the younger ones. In an attempt to determine the effects of the longer day, Mr. Holman, Superintendent of the Division, undertook research on the matter. His findings, presented at a Home and School meeting in Strathmore in May, 1958, compared the achievement of bus children with those of the towns. He said that in the lower grades there was no obvious difference in attendance but that there was a marked drop by Grade VI. With respect to achievement, he said that in the lower grades the bus children were slightly lower but that this difference disappeared by Grade VI, by which time too, the bus children showed less fatigue than urban children.²⁴

The most serious problem constantly before the Trustees and the Superintendent of the Wheatland School Division during the War years was

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Superintendent's Annual Report, Wheatland School Division, 1958.

²³

Ibid., 1955

²⁴

The Strathmore Standard, May 20, 1958.

that of securing a full staff of qualified teachers. Though the problem was not too serious during the initial years, it became progressively worse toward the end of the War. In the 1939-40 school year, there were in the Division two teachers with Degrees, fifty-five First Class, sixteen Second Class and two Elementary and Intermediate. There were twenty-one resignations.²⁵ In the 1943-44 school year, there were no teachers with Degrees, eighteen First Class, eight Second Class, twenty-nine Elementary and Intermediate and seven teaching with Letters of Authority and six trainees. There were a total of thirty-six Temporary Certificates. There were thirty-eight resignations at the end of the year. The increase in the number of Interim Certificates can be attributed to the number of Normal School graduates taken on the staff.²⁶ Letters of Authority were granted to married women who were hired to fill vacancies. They were granted for one year at a time to those who had teaching certificates of Second Class or higher, but who had not been teaching for a considerable length of time. Married women played an important war-time role in this respect and proved to be very capable and dependable teachers. Trainees were Normal School students who were given permission to teach after a training period of only three months. The short term training period had been instituted by the Government in 1943 to help cope with the emergency.

The large number of resignations, about one half of the total staff, was almost entirely from the one-room rural schools. They left to enlist, to take better positions available in town schools, or to enter another

25

Superintendent's Annual Report, Wheatland School Division, 1940.

26

Ibid., 1944.

vocation wherein working conditions and pay were better. Though there were some resignations from the graded and high schools, the situation in those schools with respect to maintaining qualified teachers was much better because those vacancies could be filled by "promoting" qualified teachers from the Elementary grades. The situation in the rural schools was aggravated by the fact that resignations were not by any means confined to the usual changes during the summer holidays. Teachers sometimes resigned during the year and at other times they simply walked away without any formalities.²⁷

The teacher shortage continued to be the major issue confronting the Trustees and Superintendent throughout the post-war period and well into the 1950's. In order to alleviate the situation which in the Wheatland School Division in 1946, showed a sixty per cent turnover of staff through the year, the Department of Education continued to use correspondence course supervisors who were employed to supervise one-room Elementary schools in which pupils under their supervision carried on their school work by means of courses supplied by the Correspondence Branch of the Department of Education. The lessons and exercises completed by the pupils were corrected in part by the supervisors and in part by the instructors of the Correspondence Branch. The supervisors were high school pupils of Grade XI and XII who had no Normal School training but who provided guidance with the lesson work and in some instances gave a good amount of introductory and supplementary instruction. The correspondence centres were often taken over by student teachers during the last two months of the school year to provide extra experience for them.²⁸ The Wheatland School Division resorted to the use of correspondence centres for the first time in 1946, when it was necessary to operate four of them.

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Superintendent's Annual Report, Wheatland School Division, 1944.

²⁸

Annual Report of the Department of Education, Alberta, 1952, p. 22.

There were two in 1947 and one each year from 1948 to 1953.²⁹

Government assistance to ease the teacher shortage problem was further rendered in the fall of 1946, when the policy was begun of paying teacher training fees for all one-year programme students. They also provided two hundred dollar scholarships to worthy candidates in the one-year programme and for the first year of the two-year training programme. The one year of training was brought into force to speed up teacher recruitment. Teachers completing it were given a Temporary License.

In the fall of 1949, a new bursary scheme was introduced. It provided for School Board participation in conjunction with the Government, in offering bursaries of three hundred dollars to all who could meet the requirements. In the fall of 1952, fees were paid not only for first year students but also for those in the second year of the Elementary route of the two year training programme, provided that the training was continuous. The only stipulation made in the case of fees and bursaries was that the students receiving the aid, agree to teach for two years in the School Division providing the bursary.³⁰

Owing to the chronic shortage of teachers, certain revisions were made in the Regulations governing certification by an Order-in-Council on May 17, 1954. The Order resulted in the passing of The Emergency Teacher Training Act of 1954. Regulations were effected which established for the summer of 1954, the first of the three six weeks' courses of training known as the Emergency Teacher Training Programme and also the establishment of the

29

Superintendent's Annual Report, Wheatland School Division, 1946-1953.

30

Alberta Department of Education, Annual Report, 1952, p. 75.

Junior Elementary Certificate, granted for only one year of training. Prior to this time, two years of teacher training were required to obtain a Permanent Certificate in Alberta.³¹

Under the Emergency Teacher Training Programme, successful completion of one six weeks summer session, the student was entitled to teach for one year. After this and with a Superintendent's recommendation, the student teacher could enroll in the second summer session. Again teaching privileges were granted for one year only. With a second year of teaching experience together with a recommendation from the Superintendent of Schools, the student could enter a third summer session. Thus, after the completion of three summer sessions and two years of teaching experience, the student was granted the Junior Elementary Certificate.³²

The introduction of the Junior Elementary Certificate meant a significant change in teacher certification, in that, a teaching Certificate could be acquired upon the completion of only one year of professional education. To acquire it, a student must complete an approved first year programme prescribed for teachers of the Elementary and Junior High School grades, following which training, he was granted an Interim Junior Elementary Certificate valid for three years. This could be made permanent when the holder had matriculation to the Faculty of Education, two years' successful teaching experience and a recommendation from the Superintendent of Schools. The requirements for the Standard Elementary Certificate based on two years' training, and the Standard Secondary Certificate based on two years' training, remained the same. All of these certificates, upon the third year of training,

31

Ibid., 1954, p. 8.

32

Ibid., 1955, p. 75.

qualified a teacher for the Professional Certificate, and upon completion of the fourth year of training, to the Bachelor of Education Degree.³³

Though the measures introduced by the Government to improve teacher supply were helpful, they did not eliminate the problem. As centralization progressed, however, the need for rural school teachers gradually diminished. By 1954, there was no further need to hire correspondence supervisors within the Wheatland School Division. Furthermore, the recruitment of married teachers who numbered about thirty percent of the staff during the decade of the 'fifties, and the employment of bursary students, made possible the staffing of all schools with qualified teachers within the Division. The number of high school students within this area applying for bursaries up to 1958, averaged about five per year with the number each year varying from three to eight. Staff turnover continued to be very high with about fifty percent of the teachers resigning each year. In the latter part of the decade the teacher shortage became more acute in the high school grades, especially in obtaining high school teachers to handle the heavier loads in the small one and two-room high schools. In 1957, the Wheatland Division spent seven hundred dollars in advertising for teachers besides a considerable sum for telephone calls and mileage for interviews. A bright note in the picture was the increase in the number of teachers with Degrees. Many of the senior teachers, following the War, had improved their training qualifications by attendance at University Summer Sessions. There were on the Wheatland Divisional staff from eleven to fifteen teachers with degrees, one out of a yearly average of 78 teachers, during the years 1952 to 1958, inclusive.³⁴

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Alberta Department of Education, Annual Report, 1954, p. 67.

³⁴

Superintendent's Annual Report, Wheatland School Division, 1952-58.

Although much was accomplished toward increasing the teacher supply by lowering requirements and by the expenditure of large sums of money by the Government and by the Divisional Board in bursaries, other inducements were resorted to in the way of better teacherages and more attractive salary schedules.

The trustees, in their attempt to obtain and keep better qualified teachers, acted not only to make more teacherages available but to make them more comfortable. In many cases, to encourage married teachers to take positions, teacherages were built with two bedrooms. These teacherages were much improved over those of previous years. With the development of rural electrification after the War, it was possible to install electric power in all rural schools and teacherages. In Strathmore where a water supply system was installed in the town, tap water was made available in the duplex teacherage there. The same applied to sewer facilities, which were also installed in Strathmore. The latest development in home comfort and which was also supplied to the teacherages, was the use of natural gas for heating and cooking. This was made available to most of the towns in the Division in 1960, with extension of natural gas lines to those towns.³⁵ Many rural teacherages were thus equipped with all the facilities and comforts of a city home. In many teacherages where natural gas was not available, oil heating was installed,

With the post-war boom and its consequent rise in salaries and wages in all industries, it followed that if teachers were to be obtained, their salaries must be brought into line with those of other occupations. In 1943, a new salary schedule was made effective which provided a minimum salary

of \$900 and a maximum of \$1200 for teachers of Elementary grades, a minimum of \$1100 and a maximum of \$1485 for Intermediate, and a minimum of \$1300 to a maximum of \$1755 for High School. It provided for a cost-of-living bonus of \$40 per year above the regular salary and for annual increments commencing after two years at five percent of the minimum until the maximum was reached. It also provided extra remuneration ^{for} special qualifications.³⁶

Over the next ten years, teachers' salaries were substantially increased. The 1953 schedule was based on training and experience. It provided a basic minimum of \$2000 for a teacher of one year's training and no experience, to a maximum of \$4400 for a teacher of four year's training and twelve years of experience. It provided full credit for past experience, an annual dependants' allowance of \$100 for married men and widows, a principals' and vice-principals' supervision allowance of ninety and fifty-five dollars, respectively, for each room exclusive of their own, an allowance of \$25 per course for work toward a Masters Degree to a maximum of \$150, and cumulative sick leave to a maximum of one hundred days plus twenty for the current year. Teachers were also paid \$60 per year for special qualifications when they gave instruction in the subject.³⁷

Over the following five years the schedule underwent yearly revision with steady increases in both maximum and minimum levels. The 1958 schedule provided for a basic minimum of \$2600 to a maximum of \$6800 for six years' training. It gave annual increments from \$150 to \$300. It also provided a dependants' allowance of \$100 and supervision allowance based on the number of rooms in the school. Principals and Vice-Principals were allowed \$125

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The Strathmore Standard, June 3, 1943.

³⁷

Superintendent's Report, Wheatland School Division, 1953.

and \$75 per room, respectively, for the first six rooms and lower rates per room for any beyond six.³⁸

In the matter of providing for educational requirements, the Divisional Board developed extensive programmes in options, educational aids and library facilities.

Instruction in General Shop and in Home Economics was provided pupils in all high school classes by the establishment of two circuits, one for the northern section and one for the southern section of the Division. Each circuit had a travelling instructor for each of these options. Classes were conducted in all "centralizations" in Junior High and Senior High School grades. In 1954, with the implementation of coterminous boundaries, the utilization of two circuits was stopped. This change was made because in the changeover, Beiseker, Irricana, Kathryn, and Acme on the north were removed from the Wheatland Division. These formerly constituted the northern circuit. The towns of Cluny, Gleichen, and Hussar which were added to the Division on the south east were conveniently incorporated into the southern circuit. In 1955, the General Shop and the Home Economics options were offered four days per week at Strathmore and one day per week at Carseland. In 1956, further changes were made in the method of offering options. They were taught in Strathmore and Standard, with high school pupils from Carseland and Rockyford being taken by bus to Strathmore one half day per week, while high school pupils from Cluny and Hussar were taken to Standard on one half day per week. As instruction was given in Standard on two days and at Strathmore on the remaining three days, only one Shop teacher and one Home Economics teacher were required. This method has remained.³⁹

38

Ibid., 1958.

39

Ibid., 1952 to 1958 inclusive.

Typewriting continued to be a popular option. Machines were supplied for Grade VII and up, wherever there were teachers qualified to instruct in the subject. Machines were serviced annually at the Divisional repair shops at Strathmore.

School book libraries were maintained in both the school classrooms and in the Divisional office library. In 1956, the Board set the annual grant for libraries at a \$1.15 per pupil or \$28.75 per class whichever was the greater sum. Classroom libraries were stocked with subject references and magazines while the Divisional library was stocked with supplementary reading material and fiction. In each year of 1955 and 1956, a grant of \$500 was made for the purchase of supplementary books. These were sent out to teachers upon request for a limited length of time. All books were bought upon the recommendation of teacher committees. Magazines supplied included the National Geographic Magazine, Canadian Geographic, World Affairs, Canadian Nature, and The Grade Teacher. These were placed in the classrooms in accordance with the pupils' needs.⁴⁰

A feature of education that experienced rapid growth in the years following the War was audio and visual aids. In the audio field, radios, record players and to a limited extent, tape recorders came to play an increasingly important part in classroom instruction. In these years, the Audio-Visual Aids Branch of the Department of Education steadily increased the number and variety of radio school broadcasts. No school could be considered fully equipped unless it had available a number of radios for distribution to the various classrooms. Programmes and teachers' guides

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Ibid., 1956.

were sent out from the Department for the teachers' use. In 1952, the Wheatland Division had a total of thirty-four radios in the schools. Record players, too, were finding a place in the classroom, especially as an aid to teaching music. These were a great improvement over the old phonograph previously used as they were electrically operated and provided much better tone quality and greater amplification. Long-play records giving music accompaniment to graded series of music texts became especially useful. By 1955, all schools were equipped with one or more record players for distribution to the classrooms.⁴¹

Visual aids in the form of motion films and filmstrip projections continued to play an increasingly important role in education. Motion picture machines with sound were much improved and simplified, making them more adaptable to classroom use. The filmstrips, a relatively new development, became an effective and popular aid with filmstrips being available in practically all subject matter. Motion picture machines were placed in all large centralized schools. Films were obtainable from the Department of Education. Filmstrips were purchased annually by the Divisional Board and made available to the schools from a central library, though many schools preferred to build their own libraries of filmstrips. Over the years 1955, 1956, and 1957, the Wheatland Division purchased filmstrips to the extent of one thousand dollars.⁴² The cost of a filmstrip varied from three to six dollars each.

In addition to educational aids, other features were introduced with the aim of improving the learning situation of students. Immediately

⁴¹

Ibid., 1955.

⁴²

Ibid., 1956 and 1957.

following the organization of the Division, the Superintendent began the policy of holding teacher institutes in each Subdivision to familiarize the teachers with Board policies and procedures. These meetings were and have been of special benefit to teachers new to the staff. They were held in addition to the principals' meetings held regularly throughout the school year and which were designed to facilitate school administration and instruction. At their meetings the principals discussed plans for the years' work, matters of courses, texts, Enterprises and other problems involved in school administration and supervision. At both institutes and principals' meetings, speakers were sometimes brought in to inform and inspire the teachers. In 1951, for example, Dr. A.L. Doucette, Director of the Southern Branch of the University of Alberta, addressed the teachers of each Subdivisional institute, inspiring them and acquainting them with the new Science courses. In the same year Mr. G.L. Mowatt, High School Inspector, met with the high school teachers and arranged details of high school organization. Miss B. MacFarlane, Provincial Director of Home Economics helped with the reorganization of courses in that option.⁴³

Scholarships, also designed to improve education, were offered to pupils making the highest marks in academic achievement. In 1949, the Strathmore Home and School Association initiated a twenty dollar scholarship for the Grade 1X pupil making the highest academic achievement in the Wheatland School Division.⁴⁴ In 1951, however, this policy of the Home and School Association was discontinued in favour of giving a trophy in the nature of a cup to the Grade 1X student of highest standing in the Strathmore

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Ibid., 1951.

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The Strathmore Standard, February 2, 1950.

School only.⁴⁵ A further contribution was made in 1958, by the Strathmore Home and School Association when they instituted a fifty dollar scholarship to the Grade XII student making the highest academic standing. In addition to these scholarships the Superintendent's report for 1953, lists eight scholarships for Grade IX and four for Grade XII pupils within the various towns and presented by federal, provincial and local agencies. Among these scholarships were the Dr. Kirby Scholarship awarded each year to the pupil of highest standing in Grade IX in one and two-room high schools of Alberta and presented by the Alberta Federation of Home and School Associations, the Governor-General's Medal for the Grade IX pupil of highest standing in the Wheatland School Division and the Wheatland Division Scholarship of twenty-five dollars for the pupil of Grade IX making the highest standing in the Wheatland School Division. The Grade IX awards were made following the marking of the Grade IX final examination papers. The Grade XII scholarships were local to each "centralization".⁴⁶

Another policy adopted by the Wheatland Divisional Board with the purpose of helping to bring about higher achievement was the policy of dealing with laggard students capable of better marks but who failed to put forth the effort to attain a pass mark in their subjects. It was introduced in 1958. In applying it, the Trustees felt that following the first reporting period, the teachers would know the laggard pupils and that by the end of November the parents would be informed of the nature of the problem. Following this, if there was no improvement, the parents

45

Ibid., April 3, 1952.

46

Superintendent's Annual Report, 1953.

would be given a month's notice, about the end of January, of the intention of the Board to expel them unless noted improvement within that time was shown.⁴⁷

Although action had been taken to encourage the brilliant through scholarships, and measures taken to motivate the laggard, still other steps were taken in an attempt to help in the education of another group of pupils, the Indian children of the Blackfoot Indian Reserve which bordered the Wheatland Division on the south and southeast. This action came in 1957, when Mr. W.E. Frame, Regional Inspector of Indian schools, along with Mr. J.R. Wild, Superintendent of the Blackfoot Indian Reserve, interviewed the Wheatland Divisional Board about integration of the Reserve children into Divisional schools. Following further consideration, forty-two Blackfoot pupils were admitted to classes in September, 1959.

With the exception of one pupil at Strathmore, and taken to school on a Divisionally operated bus, all others were supplied transportation by the Department of Indian Affairs. Of these, thirteen Elementary pupils attended at Carseland, sixteen Elementary and Junior High pupils attended at Gleichen, and three Junior High and Senior High pupils attended at Cluny. At the time, the Wheatland Board had no long-term contract with the Department of Indian Affairs and the arrangement was on a trial basis subject to review. The experiment was part of a Dominion-wide programme carried out by Federal authorities. According to Mr. Holman, Divisional Superintendent, it worked very well, both from the standpoint of the pupils and the teachers.⁴⁸ It was continued the following year with the Department

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The Strathmore Standard, November 6, 1958.

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The Strathmore Standard, September 24, 1959.

of Indian Affairs paying operational costs for the pupils, less the debenture payment charges and Divisional transportation costs.⁴⁹

With respect to the matter of providing health services, the Wheatland Board felt that such responsibility should rest with the municipalities and until 1944, provided none. In 1944, however, the Trustees, at the request of the Alberta Department of Health made an agreement with the Department whereby a Wheatland Health Unit was organized as a War emergency measure. Expenses incurred in the operation of the Unit were shared equally by the Department and the Division. The establishment of a complete health unit was considered impossible until after the War. To carry on the required services, the Wheatland Board hired Miss P. Routledge whose duty it was to visit schools, give health talks, perform immunizations, and to give personal advice to pupils and parents regarding health problems. She also taught pre-school and infant clinics from time to time.⁵⁰ In 1952, the emergency unit organized within the Division was brought to an end. The northern part of the Division came under the care of the Drumheller Health Unit while the southern part came under the care of the Bow Valley Health Unit.⁵¹ In 1956, a further change incorporated the Wheatland Division entirely within the Drumheller Health Unit.⁵²

In their history, Rural Health Units or districts were instituted in 1929 by an amendment to the Public Health Act which made provision for the formation of District Health Units. By the amended Act, each health

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Ibid., August 25, 1960.

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Superintendent's Annual Report, 1944.

⁵¹

Ibid., October 31, 1952.

⁵²

The Strathmore Standard, March 15, 1956.

district consists of several municipalities, usually five, plus any towns and villages in the area. Administration is in the hands of a District Board of Health composed of one representative from each municipality or by a Board representing the area of a school division and supervised by the Department of Health. The executive staff consists of a district health officer who is a medical doctor, one or two registered nurses, a qualified sanitary inspector, and a secretary who is capable of acting as a laboratory technician. Their duties are to educate the public in disease prevention, to conduct clinics, to offer immunization against communicable diseases, to examine school children and to inspect slaughterhouses, hotels, restaurants, dairies, tourist camps and other places which might spread disease in the community, to give advice regarding water and sewage installations and in general, to promote the general welfare of the district.⁵³

In the matter of extracurricular activities since the formation of the Wheatland School Division, the schools experienced a poor start. Very little was done for the first few years along lines of organized activities. Beginning 1942, field days were held in each Subdivision until 1952, at which time they were discontinued and not revived until 1957. In that year the policy of holding one field day at Standard was begun. From that time this field day has been held annually with nearly all schools of the Division participating. It has proved a popular event. Hockey was organized on an inter-school basis beginning 1946. It was planned to operate with two leagues, one for the northern section and one in the

south. Following the season of play the two league winners then played for the Divisional championship and a trophy.⁵⁴ High school curling, which was introduced in Strathmore previous to that District entering the Division, was extended in 1950 to include other schools of the Division. Both boys' and girls' rinks were formed with play in each section terminating in a bonspiel. In their competitions, the pupils vied for local honours which would lead eventually to competition for provincial championships. Divisional competition in basketball was made possible in Strathmore with the construction of the auditorium in 1955. It quickly became a popular activity.⁵⁵ In other respects each "centralization" had their own events. These included school fairs, student union activities such as ice carnivals, dramatic groups and dances.

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The Strathmore Standard, March 17, 1955.

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Ibid., November 29, 1956.

CHAPTER VI

THE STRATHMORE CENTRALIZATION

The development of the Strathmore Centralization was typical of that of most other centralizations. The Strathmore School began as a centralization in 1945, when the Strathmore School District became amalgamated with the Wheatland School Division. At that time pupils from the Cheadle and the Harwood School Districts were already enrolled there. In the following years, schools in the surrounding areas were closed as the Divisional Board found it expedient and the pupils were taken to Strathmore. By 1949, pupils were enrolled from the Akenstad, Glencairn, Crowfoot, Hervey, Berta Bale, Fairplay, Orange Valley, and Turner Schools as well as those from the Harwood and Cheadle Districts.

To accommodate these pupils, who at that time numbered some 268, eleven classrooms and thirteen teachers were employed.¹ To make this accommodation possible, the Board brought in schoolhouses from the rural Districts which had been closed and placed them upon the school grounds. The resulting conditions were not good because classrooms were spread apart over the grounds and because they lacked modern facilities. These unsatisfactory conditions aroused the resentment of the parents, especially those of the town, whose children were required to attend classes in the old buildings. Many expressed the view that they would have been better served had they not joined the large Division. When building materials came into fair supply, they demanded that something be done about it. Petitions

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Annual Returns, Strathmore School, June, 1950.

were forwarded by local organizations such as the Home and School Association, the Lions Club, the Town Council, the Community Council and the local Board of Trustees to the Divisional Board, demanding the construction of a modern plant of sufficient size to house all classrooms under one roof and equipped with modern facilities and necessary auxiliary rooms. Particular stress was put upon the need for provision of a lunchroom where hot lunches could be served since fifty percent of the pupils in attendance were from outlying districts and had to eat their lunches at school.²

Following the passing of a second money By-Law by the electors of the Division, the first By-Law having been voted down, the Divisional Trustees proceeded with plans which called for the construction of a ten classroom school, with Principal's office and Health Inspection room upstairs. In the basement were to be two playrooms, lunchroom, and Home Economics classrooms, as well as a two-room suite for use as the caretaker's quarters. The floors were to be covered with battleship linoleum, the walls to be of plywood dado with plaster above, while the ceiling was to be of soft-toned plaster. The rooms were to be decorated in pastel shades. No auditorium was to be built at the time but the foundation was to be laid for its construction at a later date. Shop facilities were not included in the plans. Instruction was to be given in this option in a schoolhouse on the grounds. The building was to be of modern design with hot water heating, running water and sewer connections. The last mentioned became possible with the installation of a sewer system in the town in 1949.³

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The Strathmore Standard, June 8, 1949; February 16, 1950.

³

The Strathmore Standard, June 8, 1950; January 18, 1951.

The new school was completed during the winter of 1952 and classes began in it on March 24 of that year. A valuable asset came to the school when a community centre lending library, recently organized, was established in the building. The town library was instituted at a special meeting of several town organizations in March of 1951. Financing was done through the contributions of the sponsoring groups, aided by Government grants which met dollar for dollar the cost of books up to \$350 per year.⁴ Eleven organizations pledged support of the project and elected a committee to handle its organization. Beginning with initial donations amounting to \$250, it grew successfully, being used for the most part by the pupils of the school.⁵

The new plant was named the Samuel Crowther School, in honour of Mr. Crowther who had died on June 25, 1951, only a few months previous to the opening of the school which he had worked hard to obtain. In naming the school after him, the School Board and the citizens of the community were bestowing a final tribute of appreciation upon a man who had done so much in the cause of education and who had earned the respect and admiration of the people. Mr. Crowther had served as teacher and Principal in Strathmore from 1924 until his death in 1951. During his years of service he had endeared himself to his pupils and friends by his wholehearted interest in his students. No one will ever know the number of students he helped through school in providing out-of-school help in their studies as well as by encouraging and stimulating them to higher achievement. A true educationalist, Mr. Crowther spent untiring effort in

⁴Ibid., March 8, 1951⁵Ibid., May 3, 1951.

developing wider educational experience for young people, for although his special fields were Social Studies, English, French and Latin, the success of school fairs, musical festivals, oral French clubs and track meets was to his credit. He was active in teachers' affairs, taking a leading part in the organization of the first Strathmore-Carseland A.T.A. Local, in 1924, and the Strathmore Local in 1938. He was active in the Wheatland Local after its formation in 1942, serving as councillor and as a member of negotiating committees. In addition to being an enthusiastic teacher and administrator, Mr. Crowther was an active participant in community affairs. As a community worker he was a member of nearly every worthy organization. In this respect he organized the Strathmore Community Council and was instrumental in the organization of the first public library. He acted as a police magistrate from 1948 until 1951, was a warden of the Anglican Church, and a member of the Lions Club, the Masonic Order, and the Strathmore Legion.⁶

The new plant, spacious as it seemed at the time of construction, soon proved inadequate owing to the increasing enrollment of pupils from the Nightingale School which also included pupils of the Serviceberry and Glamis School Districts, and the Cheadle Buttes School, all of which were closed by 1955. This completed the centralization in Subdivision 1 of the Wheatland School Division. At the same time, with classes being held in the basement playrooms, the Wheatland Board in 1955, added four more classrooms to the school, a Science room, a combination Library and Typing room, and completed construction of the auditorium. Three hundred

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A.T.A. Magazine, May, 1956, p. 19.

and ninety-one pupils were now accommodated.⁷ Over the next three years, because of a steadily increasing population in the town and in the rural areas, the school enrollment rose to 509, making necessary the use of the basement rooms again for classroom purposes. To alleviate the crowded conditions the Board, in 1959, added eight more classrooms plus a visual aids projection room.⁸

In the early years of Divisional administration, although control was in the hands of the Divisional Trustees, much good work was accomplished by local Boards of the former rural districts and by associations such as the Home and School Association. They brought matters to the attention of the Trustees and exercised considerable influence upon Divisional administrators to bring about desirable improvements. As centralization progressed, however, local Boards of School Districts which had been closed, soon came to have little or no active interest in school affairs. Interest was maintained only by the residents of the Districts in which "centralization" was located and these parents found themselves being more and more concerned over matters which affected children who came from Districts other than their own.

To distribute the burden of responsibility and reactivate the interest of the parents, Section 84 of the 1952 School Act was revised to provide for them the same rights as electors in which the centralized school was operating. The effect of the Act was to make the parents electors in the local District in which their children were attending school, even though their homes may be outside the District.⁹ The Board of Local

⁷ Superintendent's Annual Report, 1955.

⁸ Ibid., 1958.

⁹ Alberta Department of Education, Annual Report, 1953, p. 94.

Trustees so formed became the Board of Trustees for the "centralization".

The Board of Trustees of the Strathmore "centralization" was formed at the direction of the Deputy Minister of Education in September, 1955. He directed that one Board of five Trustees only should be elected for the 15 districts comprising the Strathmore Centralization. The Districts were divided into four groups. The Strathmore School District was in itself one district having two representatives to the Board while the remaining fourteen were divided into three groups of five, five and four districts each, with each group having one representative elected.¹⁰

The chief function of the Centralization Board is to act as advisor to the Divisional Trustees, having at heart the interests of their own particular school centre and the welfare of the pupils attending it. Matters which the local Board wishes to bring before the Divisional Board are first brought to the attention of the Subdivisional Trustee for the Subdivision, who in turn makes the necessary recommendation to the Board of the Division who act upon the proposals according to their judgement.¹¹

Principal of the Strathmore School for the past decade has been Mr. Ian Mackenzie. He succeeded Mr. Crowther in 1951. Mr. Mackenzie first came to the Strathmore staff in 1928. After teaching for two years he was appointed to the position of Vice-Principal. In this capacity he was in charge of athletic activities within the school. He was made commander of the Cadet Corps in 1928, when it was reorganized after a

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School Board Records, Wheatland School Division, September 1955.

11

School Board Records, Wheatland School Division, November 1955.

lapse of four years. He was General Shop instructor in Strathmore for three years previous to his enlistment in the Second World War. He returned to teaching in Strathmore in 1946, succeeding Mr. Crowther as Principal in 1951.

The centralization of schools made possible by the introduction of the large division of administration has altered considerably many aspects of school life for rural children. The value of centralization apparently cannot be denied. It has been extolled by superintendents in all divisions as the greatest single improvement in education of recent times in bringing good service to the pupils in the rural areas. The advantages claimed for the centralization of schools include: improved facilities available, facilitation of teacher recruitment, retention in school of many pupils of high school grades who would otherwise have to leave school, and the enabling of high school pupils to complete their schooling while still residing at home, and the provision of classroom schooling for many who previously were served by correspondence courses.¹²

The latest development in school administration has been the introduction of the county system which came into force in Alberta in 1950 with the passing of the County Act. By this, the boundaries of the municipality and those of the school district are coterminous, and all public services, including that of education, is centralized under one local government. Instead of education being administered by a separate school board whose sole interest is schools and whose authority over them is almost complete, the county system administers education through a

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Alberta Department of Education, Annual Report, 1955, p. 19.

committee, whose duty it is to make recommendations to the county council. The Council determines the budget requirements for school purposes from the report of the Committee and then sets the tax levy for school purposes as part of the amalgamated tax levy for the fiscal year.¹³

The need for such a system stemmed from discontent on the part of taxpayers and municipal authorities from the demands made by school officials upon available tax revenue. In the contest for funds, municipal authorities considered themselves at the mercy of the school officials whose demands were increasing annually in an attempt to meet needed improvements and changing economic conditions.

Towns and villages which maintained their own municipal government did not come under county administration except insofar as school matters were concerned. These municipalities were each allowed to elect one representative on the school committee of the county. They attended county council meetings and were given the same rights, privileges and powers on school matters only, as regular council members. The Act also provided that there should be three county councillors on the school committee and that these should always form a majority when school matters were being decided within the committee. With respect to the number of school representatives from towns and villages, the Act provided that there should not be more than three and that where the number of towns and villages exceeded three, such would be represented in rotation from year to year in such a manner that the total number of representatives from

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Alberta Department of Education, Annual Report, 1954, p. 103.

them in any year should not exceed three.¹⁴

In addition to the school committee, other committees formed from the council were the municipal committee and where the health unit lay wholly within the county, a hospital committee. Each committee submits its own budget requirements which are reviewed by the council as a whole, and each committee is responsible for the administration and expenditure of that portion of the budget approved for their purposes.

Further to the work of the school committee, the Act provides that the Divisional Superintendent of Schools appointed under the School Act, may attend all meetings of the County Council in the exercise of his duties imposed upon a superintendent by Section 199 of the School Act.¹⁵

The Wheatland School Division entered into the County System on November 22, 1960. At a joint meeting of the Council of the Wheatland Municipal District Number 40 and Board members of the Wheatland School Division Number 40, attended also by officials of the Department of Education and of the Department of Municipal Affairs, a vote was taken which favoured formation of a County. The County was to be erected the first day of January, 1961.¹⁶

The County was divided into seven Electoral Divisions, each having one councillor and of whom one was chosen as chairman of the Council. The School Committee, in addition to the three council members, contained

14

The County Act, 1955, Sections 17, Section 21.

15

The County Act, 1955, Revised Statutes of Alberta, 1955, Chapter 64, Section 28.

16

The Strathmore Standard, November 24, 1960.

three representatives from towns and villages. Since there are more than three such municipalities, they are represented in pairs, one of each pair electing a representative alternately every second year. The County was officially named the County of Wheatland No. 16.¹⁷

¹⁷

Ibid., March 9, 1961.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the presentation of this work, the writer has endeavored to trace the major developments in education in the Strathmore area from the turn of the century to 1958. He has attempted to relate the changes in education to the economic and social developments over the years, and to show how they have influenced the lives of the people in the area.

The area under discussion is centered around the town of Strathmore which is located thirty miles east of Calgary on the Trans-Canada Highway. It is the center of a large agricultural area which is devoted principally to grain growing and stock raising. The town had its beginning as a railway siding. During the construction of the irrigation system which was begun by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company in 1903 and completed in 1910, many settlers were brought into the area and it soon grew into a thriving farming settlement. The village of Strathmore itself grew rapidly and by 1911 had attained sufficient population to be inaugurated as a town. It served as a trading center for an area of about ten miles radius.

With the influx of settlers came a demand for schools. Between the years of 1904 and 1912 ten rural and one village school districts were erected in the area. All of these early schools, except for the first school built in the village of Cheadle in 1904, conformed in structure and equipment to the Regulations of the Department of Education of Alberta. They were all started on the initiative of residents of the districts formed. Revenue for school operation was obtained from local taxation and from Government grants. School affairs for each district erected were administered by a board of trustees who were elected by the ratepayers of the

district. In the execution of their duties, the trustees were confronted with many problems, the most serious of which involved the securing and maintaining of properly qualified teachers. A further problem was that of overcoming irregular attendance and maintaining satisfactory achievement on the part of the pupils, especially those of upper elementary and high school grades. This problem was caused by the need of the pupils' help at home during the busy seasons of the year. Although education during this early period suffered considerably from the conditions existent in a pioneer settlement, it did serve the needs of the people at that time and formed a foundation upon which the pattern of education was set for years to come.

The second period, referred to as the period of expansion, involved social, economic and educational developments from 1919 to 1940. Immediately following the First World War the population of the West increased from the return of men from the Front and from the influx of immigrants from war ravaged Europe who came to Canada to seek a new life. Many of these people settled in the Strathmore area and infused the districts with new life and new demands. With increased population came increased prosperity. European demand for food products caused increased production in Western Canada. New scientific advances made many conveniences available to the people. These social and economic developments brought changes in the educational field. Teachers were more plentiful and better qualified. Rural isolation was largely overcome due to improved road conditions and automobile transportation. Telephone and radios made life in the country more tolerable, a factor in improving teacher tenure. Pupil interest in education was increased. Better attendance was evident and there was an increased interest in high school education.

During this period in the Strathmore area, there were other developments brought about in education by teachers and conscientious school board members. Music periods were included on school programmes and teachers began to show an interest in dramatics as a means of helping to develop their pupils socially. Visual aids were also becoming recognized as a help in teaching. The issuing of report cards to the parents on their children's academic progress was initiated. Extracurricular activities were inaugurated such as school fairs, dramatic festivals, field days and interschool competition in sports. The health of the school pupils also received the attention of school authorities.

The world-wide economic depression which began in the early 'thirties, had disastrous effects upon western Canada as upon other areas of the world. The Strathmore area suffered accordingly. With continued high production, and a disappearing market, price levels for farm produce fell to very low levels. Under these conditions unemployment reached unbelievable heights. Rural youth found themselves with nothing to do and so turned their attention to furthering their high school education. With insufficient money to attend town and city schools they entered the one-room rural schools to get what education they could. The result was a very unsatisfactory educational situation. With the advent of the Social Credit party to government office in 1935, The Honourable Mr. William Aberhart as premier and Minister of Education introduced the system of large school administrative units to Alberta rural areas. The admission of villages and towns to the system in 1938 made possible the organization of centralization in several of the village and town centers. This, combined with the use of bus transportation of children from surrounding farms, made possible the opportunity for rural

youth of the Strathmore area to secure a high school education while still living at home. The quality of education was improved through the employment of better qualified high school teachers and through better equipped classrooms. Other advantages gained through the new method of administration included a renovation programme of school buildings which had become run down. Those beyond repair were replaced by new buildings. There was, too, an improvement made in school library facilities and the provision of a central library. Generous contributions were made toward the purchase of books each year. Considerable saving was made possible in the purchase of supplies in bulk quantities.

The third period dealing with events between 1940 and 1958 was greatly influenced by the occurrence of World War II with its demands for occupational personnel and building construction materials. This created a very serious problem for Divisional trustees. Teachers became scarce. Many poorly trained teachers were necessarily employed to keep classrooms open. The construction of schools was delayed during and after the War for several years. It wasn't until the early 'fifties that conditions began to assume normal proportions. The shortage of teachers hastened the school centralization process, which by 1955, had become complete with the exception of the Hutterite schools. With building materials in better supply by the early 'fifties the Divisional Boards were able to build large new plants of latest design, fully equipped with modern facilities. These replaced the old plants which had become inadequate for the needs of the times. Bus transportation was improved with the employment of modern comfortable vehicles, and municipal roads over which the buses travelled were also improved. Contributing considerably to the improvement in teacher supply were various measures introduced by the Provincial Legislature in providing bursaries for teachers in training

and by the enactment of new legislation pertaining to teacher certification. Salaries for teachers were much increased and brought into line with the salaries in other lines of work. In addition to these measures the Divisional Boards provided modern teacherages with up-to-date conveniences with a view to encouraging teachers to accept positions and to induce them to stay longer.

During the period under review in the Strathmore area, education underwent much development. Curriculum changes were brought about which gave a broader education and better preparation for the future by the addition of electives to the school programmes. Library facilities were further improved and audio-visual aids as a teaching aid were extended. The use of the radio in the classrooms with school broadcasts especially designed for school use, were employed. Scholarships were offered for worthy effort and achievement. Health services were extended and intensified. More attention was given to extracurricular activities and interschool competition.

With respect to administrative changes, the Provincial Government in conjunction with the Divisional Boards and Municipal Councils introduced coterminous boundaries as a means of reducing friction between municipal authorities and school administrators. This laid the way for the introduction of the county system by which both municipal and school matters came under the control of one authority, the County Council. The Council appointed a special Educational Committee to act upon school affairs and make recommendations to the Council.

In the development of the Wheatland School Division the Strathmore centralization became the largest centralization in the Division. Although in its initial years as a centralization it experienced some trying times,

it did develop into a progressive school with a fully equipped modern plant.

The new school which was completed in the winter of 1952, developed by 1958, into an eighteen classroom school with a school population of 509 pupils, and with a Science room, Typing room, Library and Auditorium. An important feature of the decoration of the new school was the introduction of the use of more pleasing color schemes of pastel shades for its classrooms.

Under Mr. Crowther's principalship the Strathmore School had always maintained a position in the forefront of educational philosophy and progressive educational methods. He served as principal of the Strathmore centralization during its first six years of existence. Ironically, however, Mr. Crowther did not experience the pleasure of acting as principal in the new plant, for on June 25, 1951, he died. He had served as principal and teacher in Strathmore from 1924 to 1951. During this time he set an outstanding example as a progressive teacher and community worker. The new school was named in his honour.¹

In the history of its development education in the Strathmore area was influenced by several factors which gave it certain distinctive characteristics. Important among these was the influence of the C.P.R. Company which maintained in Strathmore its demonstration and supply farm. This farm, the first of its kind in Alberta, commenced operation in Strathmore in 1909. The demonstration and supply farm was set up for the purpose of

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The Strathmore Standard, June 28, 1951.

It was to his distinct satisfaction that under his guidance and instruction John C. Garrett graduated from the Strathmore High School and entered the University of Alberta from which he received in 1936, the highest award and honour a student may achieve, the honour of being chosen Alberta's Rhodes Scholar.

educating inexperienced farmers in the use of sound agricultural methods and to provide a source of supply of good livestock, feed and garden products for Western farmers. This was done with a view to improving generally the agricultural and livestock interests of Western Canada.² Being in close proximity to the Strathmore school the C.P.R. officials took an active interest in endeavouring to develop an attitude of appreciation for the value of agriculture in the minds of the school children. They visited the schools and gave informative talks to high school students and encouraged³ and assisted in the development and beautification of the school grounds.³

Another distinctive characteristic of education in the Strathmore area was the success of its school fairs. School Board officials of Strathmore and surrounding districts felt a keen awareness of the need to develop in elementary and high school youth a greater knowledge of and interest in good agricultural methods. Strathmore school fairs were rated by school fair judges and provincial officials as being equal to the finest in the Province. The Strathmore school board members throughout the years displayed a typical progressiveness in their desire to keep pace in all aspects of education with other parts of Alberta.⁴

While education in the Strathmore area possessed the two distinctive characteristics indicated in the above two paragraphs, when the whole course of Strathmore development is scanned, perhaps another distinctive feature of the area's education is its lack of distinctiveness in the sense that the

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Strathmore Standard, May 11, 1939

3

School Board Minutes, Strathmore S.D. Vol. 1

4

Strathmore Standard, September 30, 1937

Strathmore area was not an area of educational innovation, but one where recommended educational patterns were adopted from elsewhere and then adapted to local situations. The result was a "good" level of education, as the "good" level was defined at each stage of the development of education in the Province. In this way, education in the Strathmore area, though it might well be termed progressive, was not distinctive. It was, however, always in the main current of Alberta educational development from 1904 to 1958, as the province's education was changed to meet changing social conditions.

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B I B L I O G R A P H Y

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